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JULY 1983

The Journal Of Professional Adventurers

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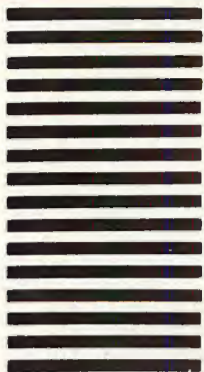
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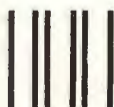
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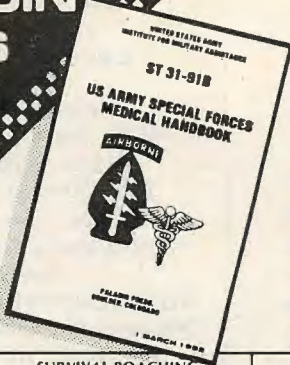
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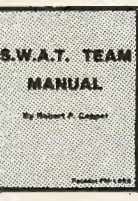
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EDITOR'S NOTE

by Jim Graves

FIRST, I would like to extend our thanks to our regular readers for not inundating us with letters and phone calls in the last six weeks regarding the absurd but serious accusations made by James G. "Bo" Gritz against *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, Publisher Robert K. Brown and Foreign Correspondent Jim Coyne. Because you, our readers, kept faith, we had the time to get out our 74-page newsstand-only POW/MIA Special Issue, which covers extensively Gritz's activities, and two regular SOF issues in six weeks, while breaking in a new typesetting system and an editorial computer front-end system. A system, I might add, which appears to be programmed to tilt at the worst possible moment.

I have always had a high opinion of our readers' loyalty and intelligence — an opinion not shared by Gritz, who referred to SOF as a magazine which caters to "closet soldiering" — and so I was not surprised when we received only two angry phone calls and four letters about the Gritz affair. When you consider that we sell more than 200,000 issues each month and have about 600,000 readers total, the .00001 percent who rushed to judgment is insignificant.

For those unfamiliar with the story, Gritz is a controversial retired Army lieutenant colonel who has been organizing private attempts to locate and free unaccounted-for Americans in communist-controlled Southeast Asia since 1979.

Gritz's previous operations, Velvet Hammer and Grand Eagle, were underfinanced and poorly planned. Another trademark of a Gritz operation is publicity. The Velvet Hammer team included an ABC producer, two reporters and a photographer. There were also a psychic, a hypnotist and a number of people with dubious backgrounds and no known covert or recon experience. Grand Eagle included more of the same and, while it went beyond the United States, it never got into communist territory before falling apart.

There have been some who have speculated, with considerable justification, that the purpose of both operations, from the very beginning, was publicity.

It was the publicity from Velvet Hammer and Grand Eagle that enabled Gritz to go on the circuit around the nation from late 1981 to September 1982, raising money for his most recent rescue effort. It was while making these public appearances that Gritz made the mistake which has damaged his creditability the most. In a public speaking engagement in Buffalo, N.Y., he told the moving story of the death of a Sgt. Hoagland, Special Forces, Project

Continued on page 22

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SOF

JULY/1983 VOL. 8, NO. 7

PARTING SHOT

Ken Hackathorn

Handguns galore at Dallas
show. 21

THREE BATTLES, Part I

Edward Doyle

Marines show mettle in
Operation Hastings. 24

INSIDE FREE ANGOLA

Rick Venable

SOF's Savimbiland sojourn.
33

INTRIGUE IN AFRICA

Charles W. Sasser

Liberia's SF-trained
commandos lose before
battle. 40



Page 48

Cover Photo: Two Marines from Gulf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, ford a stream northwest of Dong Ha in Quang Tri Province during Operation Hastings in July 1966. During the 10-day operation the Marines met and stopped North Vietnam's 324B Division, which was intent on severing Quang Tri Province from the control of South Vietnam. Hastings set the pattern and stage for a number of battles the Marines fought against NVA divisions over the next two years. An examination of that battle appears in Part I of "Three Battles," which starts on page 24. Photo: USMC

THE WAR ON OUR DOORSTEP

John Metzger

SOF jumps into Central
America. 48

ISRAEL'S DEADLY DESERT FIGHTER

Peter G. Kokalis

Galili's gun outfoxes the
desert. 60

FLAK 6

Combat Weaponcraft 8

I Was There 10

In Review 12

Full Auto 14

Bulletin Board 16

SOF Convention 18

Advertisers Index 91

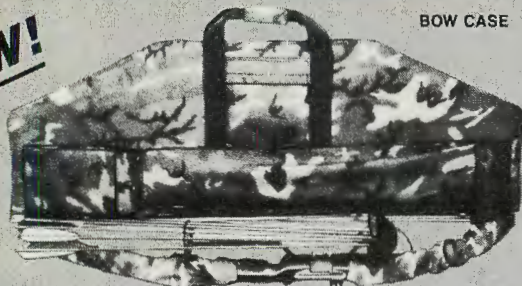
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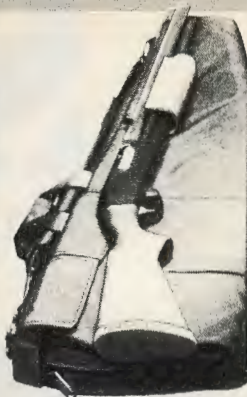
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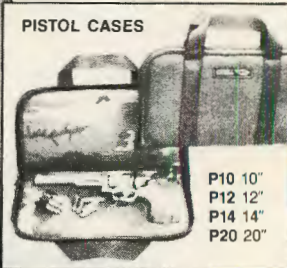
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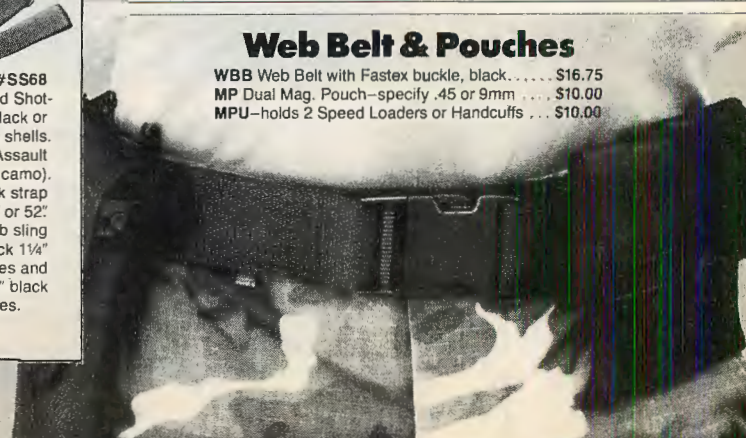
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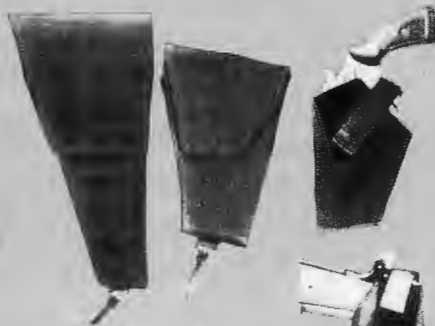
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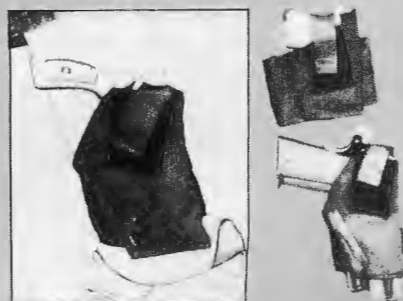
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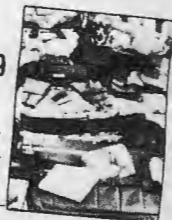
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TRAITOR JANE...

Sirs:

I have just read the editorial "Jane Fonda: From Hollywood to Hanoi and Back," by Tom Carhart (see SOF, March '83). Thank God someone has the guts to tell the truth about this enemy of America. I knew of her famous M.S.U. (Michigan) speech but was unaware of the Duke U. speech. I would like to thank Mr. Carhart for this and the case law information. Jane Fonda and her activities, past and present, often come up as a topic of debate where I work, and this article has provided me with fresh rounds to fire at my "Bleeding Heart Liberal" opponents.

Friends and I have authored a petition calling for "Comrade Fonda" to be held accountable for her acts of treason, or let us as voters know the reason why not! Should anyone like a copy to pass around, I will be glad to provide it. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Petition, Box 9186, Whittier, CA 90608.

J. Sabatini
Whittier, California

AND MORE JANE...

Sirs:

I have been wanting to write this letter to you for some time. I believe it is about time that a movement against Jane Fonda took place. After the crap that she pulled during the Vietnam War, I feel that strong legal action should be taken against her! With her taking supplies to the VC and NVA, who is to say that the items that she provided did not make one or more communists healthy enough to go out and kill Americans. I really feel that a nation-wide boycott of all her movies, books and records is in order. I further believe that she should be stripped of all rights granted to a U.S. citizen. As a Vietnam veteran, I only wish that I could have been in Hanoi to welcome her.

Nash
Auburn, Illinois

Quite a number of Vietnam veterans have quietly been boycotting Jane Fonda movies for a long time. As one of those who follows that practice, I recommend it to everyone. In addition, we recommend that you speak out forcefully when the topic of Fonda and what she did comes up. While it may be unrealistic to expect that any action will be brought against her or her type for their actions in the 1960s and 1970s, there is no reason why we should not damn her activities at every available opportunity.

—Jim Graves.

OLDER THAN YOU THINK...

Sirs:

In FLAK, October '82, David M. Frantz stated that the United States has had a grenade launcher for five years.

That's incorrect. I'm giving you a photo of an XM174 being fired from a

FLAK



"Husky" in Vietnam on 30 October 1969. So you see, we've had one for over 10 years. 'Nam was the testing ground for the auto launcher. Also find a copy of the photo's reverse side giving date and file number and where the photo was taken.

If I remember correctly, it had a firing rate of 450 to 550 rpm. Note the casing about to be ejected after firing.

Gary Nelson
Roanoke, Virginia

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?...

Sirs:

I wish to compliment you and your staff on the March '83 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*. The articles on Central and South America were most interesting, and your authors' unique reporting makes your magazine second to none.

I've sent a brochure describing a valuable research service which you and your staff may be interested in. The Vanderbilt University Library, Nashville, TN 37203, where I am employed as business manager, maintains a television news archive which collects videotapes of the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS and NBC. The taping began on 5 August 1968. This research tool may be of use to

your staff in preparing articles on the Vietnam War. In addition, you may want to make the service known to your readers who may be preparing monographs on Vietnam.

Best wishes, and keep telling it as it is.
James Via
Madison, Tennessee

MODIFIED M60...

Sirs:

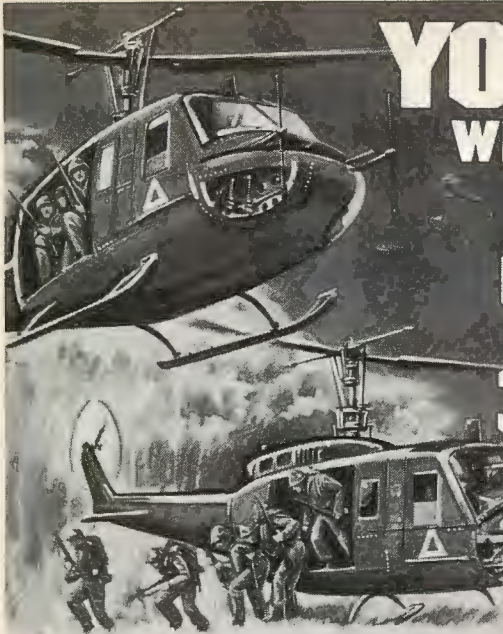
I have been reading your magazine for over three years and it is the only one I read from cover to cover. I was in the 9th Infantry Division, 347 Mobile Riverine Force, and for seven months of my year in Vietnam, I carried an M60 machine gun.

In the March '83 issue of SOF, reading "Bloody Ia Drang," I came to a picture on page 26 of members of Blue Platoon. The M60 in the photo looked a little strange to me and it took about 30 seconds to figure out why. The barrel had been cut even with the gas cylinder extension. With that, the sight and bipod were gone. I wonder if anybody else noticed it.

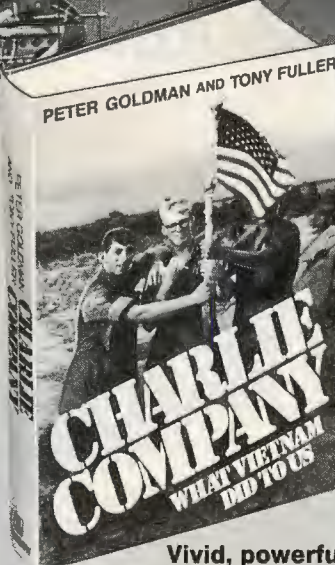
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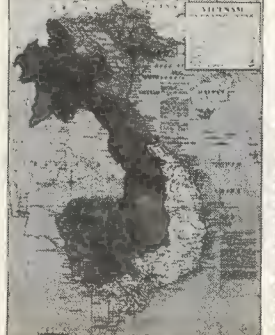
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COPS are just like other human beings, and they prove it by having fads. Since WWII, American police, when they were buying their own pistols, went from Colt .38s to S&W .357s to .44 Mag revolvers. What will be next?

Everybody who knows anything about guns knows and has loved Colt and S&W revolvers. My personal preference has run to Smith & Wesson since I first started shooting. But there have been problems. Colt and S&W revolvers get out of the plant with problems they just shouldn't have. Service pistols, especially, are found with finishing flaws, timing errors and other mechanical faults. I believe both manufacturers are improving quality control, but they still want an arm and a leg for their products.

In spite of my old loyalty to S&W revolvers, if I were buying double-action service revolvers for a police department I would look no further than Ruger. S&W still commands the greatest share of the service-revolver market, but the Ruger Security Six, Service Six and Speed Six are bound to catch up. Dollar for dollar Ruger wheelguns give the individual or department more reliability and value in an out-of-the-box pistol than can be had from the traditional revolver manufacturers.

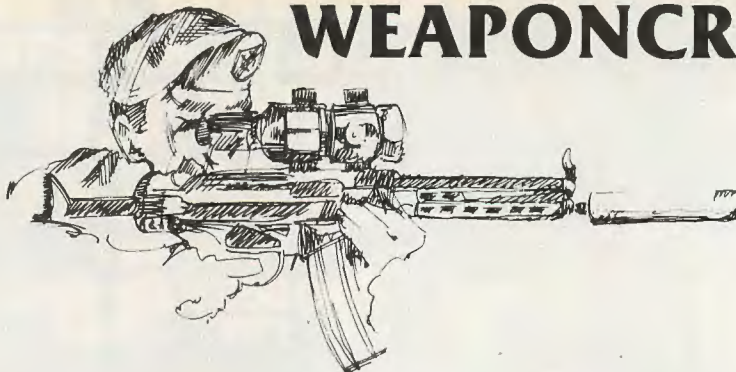
As Smith took Colt's police business in the '40s, I think Ruger must take S&W's place in the '80s. Quality control is tighter: The little things that can go wrong with a new pistol are never wrong on a Ruger wheelgun. Rugers are more rugged; my S&Ws usually need work after a few hundred rounds, but I have owned and used Rugers that have shown no visible wear after thousands of rounds of magnum loads.

As wheelgun-users shift to a sturdier, cheaper weapon, many younger cops are regularly carrying auto-loading pistols. Of course, part of this is fashion. The "Dirty Harry" movies created a run on the S&W M-29. Recent use of self-loading pistols by film good-guys seems to have done the same for the Browning-patent Colt and the S&W M-39/59 series. The decision to carry an auto-pistol agrees with my position, but there are problems.

Autos are more sensitive to cleaning and lubrication than revolvers, and can't be stuffed in a holster and ignored. They are also pickier about ammunition, since semi-autos are powered by recoil — sometimes assisted by explosive gases. But, most important, the auto-loader has more controls on it than a revolver — which normally has only a trigger — and requires more training and practice to reflexively operate the slide, slide-lock, grip and manual safeties, and (in some cases) separate cocking levers. The best corrective to the last problem is IPSC training and competition.

Mention of the auto-pistol and its use by police drags ammo-arguments along with it. Here is what I believe to be the best and last word on it. Neither .45 nor

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT



Short Arms of the Law

By Ken Hackathorn



Colt Commander, one of the best examples of the police service pistol. Photo: Colt Firearms

9mm is perfect, and their respective performances are not as far apart as their advocates would like you to believe.

The conflict of practical and laboratory experts doesn't help sort this out, but it is fair to say that, in spite of all claims, the two bullets are both short, jacketed, subsonic-to-sonic projectiles. That means that if they do tumble, they are so short it doesn't really matter. It may be true that 9mm, with its smaller diameter and

higher speed, penetrates better but it is not enough faster than .45 to cause cavitation or "ballooning" in flesh. So all you have is a slightly longer, slightly narrower hole.

Bottom line: Shot placement with a pistol cartridge is critical. Even coroners usually determine bullet-caliber by looking at the recovered slug, or from reading the police report. Given that the wound was caused by a handgun, the wound channels simply aren't going to be different enough to tell.

Like everything else, police handguns have changed, and they will continue to change.

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I WAS THERE

Water Bull and the Booby Trap

by Robert L. Schlichting as told to M.L. Jones

Robert L. Schlichting went to Vietnam in June 1970 as a Marine. His company was responsible for road security from the Song Thu Bong River to An Hoa Combat Base, and his platoon was located along Liberty Road which connected An Hoa with Da Nang. As he tells it:

SECURITY was set up by spreading the three rifle platoons of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, along Liberty Road to give equally spaced secure positions. Bravo Squad's duty consisted of day patrols, night ambushes and OP (observation post) duty. Two-man OPs were scattered along the road to keep it secure during the day. OP duty wasn't bad but it could get boring. Still, I liked it better than patrols or ambushes where you had to watch every step because of the constant threat of booby traps.

Ambushes were frustrating. They were supposed to keep the VC from planting mines and booby traps along the road, but their success was marginal. Every morning an engineer unit had to sweep the road before the daily convoy could pass through. Sometimes all these security measures worked and sometimes they didn't — as anyone could see by looking at the litter of broken pieces of tanks and trucks that were mixed in with the empty C-ration cans and other trash around the OPs.

My squad had just come in from a night ambush; it was our turn for OPs. I was assigned to go with a senior member of the squad, since new guys were always paired with someone who had quite a bit of time in the bush so they could learn the do's and don'ts of jungle fighting. Everybody called my partner Water Bull, and I'd learned to mirror everything he did.

That morning we grabbed some C-

rations and headed out, me ambling, still half-asleep, beside Bull. Even in the early morning it was hot and our olive-drab T-shirts were soon soaked with sweat.

We rounded the last corner before our OP. Bull nudged me and pointed. A group of kids were standing on our position. As I watched, they saw us and took off running.

"I don't like this," Water Bull said.

We advanced slowly, and Bull directed me to a small knoll where I was to keep watch while he investigated the OP.

The whole area was littered with C-ration cans, paper, wire, broken bits of trucks and tanks, and bamboo poles. These poles were important, since each OP erected a sun screen, using them and a poncho liner to shut out the murderous rays of the Vietnamese sun. At day's end, the poles were pulled out and tossed aside.

Water Bull walked carefully through the trash, poking and probing with his bayonet, while I scanned the terrain for any approaching "villagers." He stooped down, lifted a piece of cardboard — and froze. Then he put it down gently and finished checking the rest of the area. He called me over.

The Bull led me over to the spot where he had stopped. He gently picked up the remains of a C-ration box and pointed to what lay underneath.

My heart jumped into my mouth and my pulse started racing. I saw an M26 fragmentation hand-grenade with its pin pulled almost completely out. A wire was attached to the pin. It was partially buried by sand but it ran to one of the bamboo poles we used for our sun screen. It would have taken only one tug to make the pin slide out and the spoon fly off, activating the frag.

If I'd been with someone less experienced than the Water Bull that day, I wouldn't be writing this now. From then on, I trusted no one (especially kids) and I swore I'd be as good a teacher to new replacements as Water Bull had been to me. ☞

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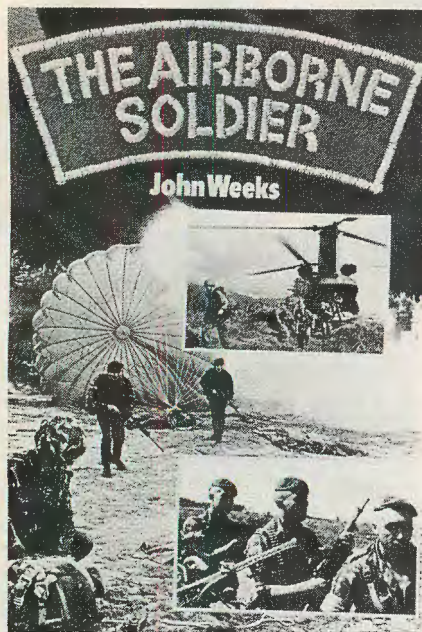
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IN REVIEW



THE AIRBORNE SOLDIER by Col. John Weeks. The Battery Press, P.O. Box 3107 Uptown Station, Nashville, TN 37219. 1982. 192pp. Lavishly illustrated in B & W and Color. \$19.95. Review by Bill Brooks.

THE *Airborne Soldier* is a well written, in-depth treatment of the history, tactics, men and machines of airborne assault warfare. This is defined as the ability to engage successfully in battle by parachute, glider, aircraft or helicopter.

Numerous photographs and drawings depict the great variety of equipment used. From the Junkers (JU 52s) or "Tante Ju," the workhorse of the German airborne troops of World War II, and the C-47, its American counterpart; to the Waco glider, known to the British as the Hadrian; to the Chinook and Huey helicopters that were so vital to Allied operations in Vietnam — all the aircraft that have delivered these special men to the battlefield are covered.

The book progresses from parachute jump school to the sites of famous airborne ops — Eban-Emael, Crete, Holland, Dien Bien Phu, Burma, Korea, Suez, Vietnam — and sketches the many leaders involved: Otto Skorzeny, Kurt Student, Hermann Ramcke, James Gavin and more. Not only does the book cover the weapons, vehicles, aircraft and personalities, but the photographs provide valuable reference for model builders, as well as uniforms and insignia. This book is a great addition for any military library.

JANE'S INFANTRY WEAPONS 1982-1983. Edited by Col. John Weeks. Jane's Publishing Co., Ltd., 238 City Road, London EC1V 2PU,

UK. Distributed by Science Books International, Inc., Dept. SOF, 51 Sleeper St., Boston, MA 02210. 1982. \$140. Review by W.B. Guthrie.

JANE'S is the best thing of its kind available without a security clearance. *Infantry Weapons* catalogs nearly everything a soldier can use, but don't treat it — or any encyclopedia — like it was the word of God. Every reference work and every writer perform certain tasks well and certain tasks badly. *Jane's* shows this as clearly as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Jane's does most things well. The range of individual weapons and weapon variants covered by the yearbook is vast. Everything is cataloged from the moribund BAR to Vietnamese copies of the Thompson SMG. It is hard to imagine that the world of small arms can be so consistently and reliably reported every year.

The editorial staff also makes some good catches in correcting previous editions. For example, last year's entry for the AK-74 gave the magazine capacity as 40 rounds. It's not. Except for the interchangeable RPK-74 magazines, AK-74 boxes hold the same number as those for AK-47s and AKMs: 30. We found that out by stuffing one of our captured magazines with captured ammunition. We don't know how *Jane's* found out, but they did and the erroneous statement is corrected in the current eighth edition.

Under Col. Weeks's direction the infantry weapons yearbook is reflexively conservative, but generally this is not obtrusive. The yearly reactionary cracks about caseless cartridge development show that conservatism at its obstructive worst. Although the running tirade against this obvious direction of small-arms development has its serial installment in the essay on ammunition, Weeks does some serious, appropriate and scrupulous back-pedaling in his foreword. Like our editor's note, the editor's foreword is probably the last thing added to the book, and it is unlikely that there was time to correct the text of the ammunition section.

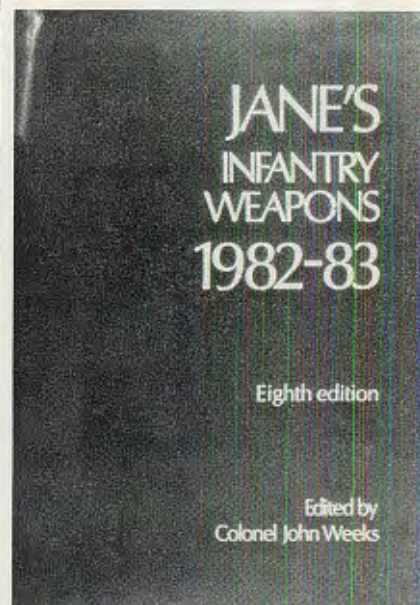
That ammunition chapter is, though, one of the most distinguished departments. A few years ago the cartridge section was a thing only a collector could love: brief descriptions of military cartridges for pistols, rifles, machine guns and cannon with a few photographs. *Jane's* ammunition adviser, Ian Hogg, seems to be responsible for the improvements, and they are especially noticeable in layout. Cartridge references in the last two editions are alphabetized by country with reproductions of headstamps, and a key to the color code, if known, as well as the names and locations of munitions plants. This chapter is now better suited to the collector's needs, as well as providing more background for the casual reader and detail for the specialist.

The only important omission from the cartridge section is the fine exposition of wound ballistics *Jane's* printed as recently as the 1979-1980 yearbook. The editor or

staff may think it was too morbidly precise, or it may have been cut to make room for the much improved and expanded ammunition charts. In any case, it is too bad, because it was the most accurate, clear and complete short piece on what projectile-caused wounds are and how they happen that was easily available to weapons students. Every cracker-barrel stopping-power fetishist should have this essay tattooed on the insides of his eyelids. The wound ballistics article could easily replace the volume's chatty foreword.

The editor's foreword is the weakest part of *Jane's*. It is a loosely strung collection of corrections, predictions and reflections which take up valuable room that could, instead, tell us how information is collected or who is responsible for this impressive catalog, in addition to the editor.

As any encyclopedia, *Jane's Infantry*



Weapons is not the last word for the specialist. There are more detailed and more complete books available on any single subject than *Jane's*. For instance, P. Labbett's *Military Small Arms Ammunition of the World, 1945-1980* is a more perfect account of what ammunition has been used in recent history, but this is possible because Labbett is not trying to cover all the world's weaponry.

Furthermore, *Jane's* gives a 300-word report on the Russian AGS-17 30mm grenade launcher with two bad pictures from Soviet sources and nothing in the way of hard technical information. If you need to know more about the weapon, see "Raiders of the Lost Grenade Launcher," beginning on p. 46 of the February '83 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*.

Jane's Infantry Weapons is, however, the only book in its class. It is staggering to think of the care and labor behind such an undertaking, and reassuring to see the job done so well. *Jane's* is the one weapons reference for all students of modern warfare that is indispensable.

Continued on page 80

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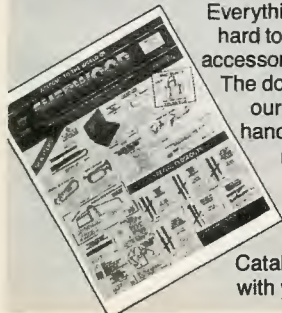
M1911/A1 KEEP HER SHOOT'IN

Genuine G.I. carrying case contains eight G.I. parts most needed to keep your .45 shooting: firing pin • extractor • ejector • magazine • firing pin spring • sear spring • recoil spring & combo tool. Moisture resistant packaged. \$24.95.

GET IT ALL FOR A BUCK!

Everything is here, hard to find parts, accessories & gear. The dollar covers our postage & handling and is refundable with your order.

Catalog is free with your order.



Since 1962, Sherwood has gained an international reputation as one of the world's largest and most reliable suppliers of ordnance and U.S. government issue field equipment. Our volume buying and huge warehouses allow us to pass on significant savings directly to you. When you're buying special equipment or clothing, get it from Sherwood...we're the experts!



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A great lightweight sweater for the sportsman! You don't have to be a shooter to enjoy our British army type combat sweaters. They're 100% Non-litch Black Acrylic with reinforced shoulders and elbows...areas that normally wear out from shooting or carrying rifles with slings. Available in XS, S, M, L, and XL. A great buy at only \$19.95. And it's washable too!

Sherwood

International Export Corporation



ZEROING

IN! Sighting doesn't have to be hairy and isn't with the new AIMPOINT ELECTRONIC SIGHT MKIII. All you do is put the red aiming point on your target and pull. Includes 2 polarizing filters for glaring targets and features a variable intensity aiming point for bright ones. Aimpoint does not magnify and is parallax-free. Only \$159.00.



SCOPED!

Aimpoint also makes a 3X scope attachment with rubber eyepiece and the same top quality optics. \$89.95

MOUNT IT! Aimpoint's own AR15/M16 mount is also built to military specs. and features quick release thumb screw. \$24.95. Also available for Colt .45 Auto's, UZI, S & W N Frame, Colt Python and Mini 14. Specify.



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Heavy duty O.D. canvas and black trim carrying cases are mildew resistant, fully padded and feature a full length, self repairing zipper and zipped accessory pocket. Colt AR-15 Rifle, HK 91/93 44" \$26.95. CAR, AR-180, 36" \$24.95. Mini-14, M-1 Carbine, 870 42" \$21.50. UZI, MAC's, 28" \$22.50.

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ABOUT YOUR ORDER

Minimum Order \$10.00 plus Minimum \$3.00 to cover postage, insurance and handling. Calif. residents add 6½% sales tax. All major credit cards accepted. SORRY, NO C.O.D.'S. If not sure about size, send measurements.

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California Residents Call
213-349-7600

WHERE can one obtain military small-arms parts, what after-market accessories are really worth a damn and where can one buy machine guns of one sort or another? I never cease fielding questions like these.

So let's take a stroll through the labyrinth and spotlight some pearls in the dust.

But first, a few ground rules. You must possess a Federal Firearms License (FFL) to receive out-of-state delivery of firearms, ammunition and reloading components. You do not need an FFL to receive gun parts, accessories or accouterments. A weapon's receiver, or that portion of it which contains the serial number (if it is more than one piece), is a firearm by BATF regulation. In other words, an AR15 or M16 lower receiver is a firearm, but the upper receiver is just a part.

A Title II firearm (machine gun, sound suppressor, etc.) can be transferred interstate only from one Class 3 dealer to another. If a Class 3 dealer in another state has an auto weapon you wish to purchase, and you can meet all the other requirements (see "Yearn for an MG?", SOF, July '81), you must arrange to have the weapon transferred to a Class 3 dealer in your state who will then transfer it to you. Only one tax-paid transfer will be involved as dealer-to-dealer transfers are tax-exempt. At the very least, always enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope when making an inquiry to any of the below and offer to pay for any available catalog or list.

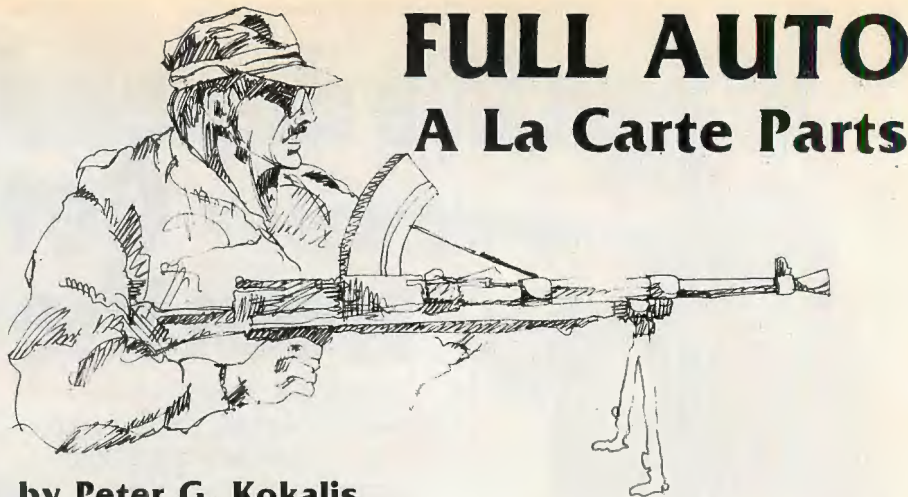
For military small-arms parts there are three important sources. They are: Numrich Arms Corp. (Dept. SOF, West Hurley, NY 12491), Sarco, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 323 Union Street, Stirling, NJ 07980) and Sherwood International Export Corp. (Dept. SOF, 18714 Parthenia Street, Northridge, CA 91324). They carry everything from firing pins up to M1917A1 tripods, and just about anything you can think of in between. Sarco also sells firearms, including full-auto weapons.

An area of special concern has always been parts for the FN FAL. Their various distributors over the years have never stocked parts, either feeling the gun was impervious to wear or that their position as FN representatives was a sinecure. Now an excellent source of parts and accessories for the entire family of FN FAL-type weapons is E.A. Wilke of Ontario Gun and Tackle (Dept. SOF, Box 1000, Matachewan, Ontario, POK 1M0, Canada). They do not sell full-auto parts.

For military accouterments, especially of the WWII era, try Globe Militaria, Inc. (Dept. SOF, RFD 1, Box 269, Keene, NH 03431).

After-market products for paramilitary weaponry abound and separating the wheat from the chaff is no small task. We have room to highlight only a few of the most interesting, and at that for only two of the most popular systems, the Colt AR15-M16 and the Heckler & Koch 91-93 series.

Specialists in the M16, Lone Star Ordnance (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 29404, San



FULL AUTO A La Carte Parts

by Peter G. Kokalis



Lone Star Ordnance makes accessories for the AR15/M16: field repair kit, stowaway pistol-grip and M16A2 handguard. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

Antonio, TX 78229) produces three items, among many, that should intrigue all AR15-M16 owners. For \$15 you can have a field repair kit that includes all the most vital repair parts: firing pin, bolt cam pin, hammer spring, extractor, extractor springs and firing-pin retainer pins. To store all this in the field, Lone Star has a stowaway pistol grip for \$9.95 which installs in seconds and features a fail-safe latch. Those seeking to update will be interested in the M16A2 handguard. For \$29.95 you can instantly give your AR15 this distinctive, functional component of the M16A2.

The full-auto G3 and HK33 rifles use the flapper-type magazine-releases instead of the spring-loaded side button found on the HK 91-93. Flapper-type releases (used also on the FN FAL, Kalashnikov and Galil) are fast and can be manipulated as the hand grabs the magazine. J.F.S., Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 12204, Salem, OR 97309) markets a flapper-type release for the HK 91-93, called the Tac-Latch, which is easy to install and speeds magazine changes.

None of us ever seem to own enough magazines for our assault rifles. Joe Steele of M&M Enterprises (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 445, Island Lake, IL 60042) distributes a nylon 20-round magazine for the HK 91 that is almost indestructible. I have been testing them for some time and they fit and function just fine. At only \$12 each, they

are less than half the cost of the Heckler & Koch factory magazine.

Lots of Class 3 dealers offer M16s, MAC 10s and other auto weapons of recent vintage. But where do you go when your pulse quickens for one of the classics? Dolf L. Goldsmith, who minds the store at ARPAC, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 901 800 Isom Rd., Suite 202, San Antonio, TX 78216), is the leading authority and dealer in machine guns such as the Maxim (08 and 08-15), Vickers, Lewis Gun, Colt, Browning, Hotchkiss, Schwarzlose and many others. ARPAC, Inc. also stocks a changing inventory of parts and accessories to keep these proud beasts cranking.

Finally, as a result of James Fallows' article "Military Marketeering" (SOF, November '82), a large number of you have written, asking if IMR propellants are still available for the 5.56mm cartridge. Eric Lutfy of Thunderbird Cartridge Co. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 302, Phoenix, AZ 85001) is the only source I know. For \$219.50, F.O.B. Phoenix, he offers a complete reloader's package which consists of 2,500 cleaned, once-fired GI cases, small-rifle primers and 55-gr. FMJ, boattail, cannellured Winchester bullets plus eight pounds of the original DuPont IMR 820 8M powder. This breaks down to only 8.8 cents per round! These components are most conveniently assembled on any one of the efficient and accurate progressive reloading machines manufactured by Dillon Precision Products, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 7755 East Gelding Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85206). ☐

The anatomy of the world's most coveted semi-automatic rifle:



FLASH HIDER/MUZZLE BRAKE—in addition to the well balanced design and gas operation, the muzzle brake keeps the Galil on target better than any other semi-auto rifle.

NIGHT SIGHTS—the Tritium lighted night sights feature dual luminous rear dots and a single front post—an improvement over any other standard night sight system.

KALISHNIKOV SYSTEM—the Galil is an improvement over the world's most reliable system. The Galil was designed to eliminate the flaws in the other Kalishnikov variants.

COCKING ACTIVATOR—also ambidextrous allowing the weak hand to quickly manipulate the bolt and leave the firing hand on the trigger.

FLIP-UP SIGHTS—the L-type rear sights simply flip up to 300 and 500 meters. Front post sight with windage corrected by a double click screw.

FOLDING BUTT STOCK—easily folds for convenience and has a simplified and more positive locking system

AMBIDEXTRIOUS SAFETY—left and right hand safeties work with the stock extended or folded. Mutual mechanical linkage works both external levers at once.

RECEIVER—a solid forged and milled receiver—not a stamped nor pressed part. One of the keys to Galil's reputation for reliability.

MR332
308 Caliber ARM Type
20 Shot Magazine

Models Available:
AR—Folding stock
ARM—Folding stock, bipod, carrying handle and wood forearm
SAR—Short barrel, folding stock
Available in Select-Fire only

FOLDING BIPOD—easily folds into the wood forestock and doubles as both a wire cutter and bottle opener.

THE GALIL RIFLE SYSTEM

Tomorrow's Rifle Today

Now! You can shoot the world's most coveted rifle! No other rifle delivers the reliability, accuracy and shooting characteristics of the Galil. The Galil's unique gas operated system has proven itself to be the most reliable in the world.

For shooters, the Galil offers the smoothest, quickest second shot of any rifle in either .223 or .308 calibers. Designed and developed by Israel Military Industries, after thorough scientific research and exhaustive testing, the Galil outperformed every other rifle. Since its development, the Galil has continued to go through extensive testing and refinement — winning convincingly every time! It is reliable under the most adverse weather conditions—heat, cold, sandstorm, duststorm, snow, rain or mud. No other rifle is built like the Galil—the receiver is milled from solid steel, the cold forged barrel, the low number of parts—all enhance the Galil's reliability.

For collectors, sportsmen, law enforcement, hunters, practical competition shooters, survivalists — there is no more reliable, dependable rifle made in the world. The legendary quality of the Galil is easy to see, shooting the Galil is now something you no longer have to just dream about. The Galil Rifle System — tomorrow's rifle today!



MR361
223 Caliber AR Type
35 Shot Magazine
(50 Shot Available)

TECHNICAL DATA:

	223	308
Weight	8.6 lbs.	8.7 lbs.
Length (stock folded)	29.8"	31.9"
Length (stock extended)	38.6"	41.3"
Barrel Length	18.1"	21.0"
Rifling	RH, 6 grooves 1 turn/12"	RH, 4 grooves 1 turn/12"
Effective Range	550 yds.	1000 yds.
Muzzle Velocity	3110 ft/sec	2820 ft/sec



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EL SALVADOR ALARM...

"If we allow a government that is reforming itself into a democracy ... to be knocked off by guerrillas who don't have the people with them, then no government in the isthmus will be safe. Nicaragua's Cuban- and Soviet-supported 'revolution without frontiers' would spread. It would head south across Costa Rica, which has no army, toward the [Panama] Canal. It would head north, putting enormous pressure on Honduras, reviving the guerrilla war in Guatemala and moving toward the Mexican border. So the struggle would go on, but on battlefields where the stakes would be much higher."

So testified Assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders, the administration's chief architect of Central American policy, before a House of Representatives subcommittee. He and Reagan hoped to convince congress to appropriate \$60 million more in aid, including military aid, to El Salvador immediately.

Claiming that the Salvadorans were running out of ammunition and time, Enders predicted "total anarchy in El Salvador" unless the United States steps in quickly with military assistance.

Quick to let the public know of his personal fears for Central America, President Reagan stated, "We believe that the government of El Salvador is on the front line in a battle that is really aimed at the very heart of the Western Hemisphere, and eventually at us."

For a more detailed look at El Salvador and Guatemala, see "The War On Our Doorstep" on p.48.

NICARAGUAN RESISTANCE GROWING...

SOF's Central American expert, Jay Mallin, reports from Central America that the *situation in* Nicaragua is heating up on three fronts, not the least of which is an internal opposition force, which Nicaragua denies, claiming instead that this opposition is imported from neighboring Honduras.

According to Mallin, the three-front threat comes from: 1) the north, FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Front), which consists of several thousand men, including Miskito Indians, and is based in Honduras; 2) the southern front, ARDEN (Nicaraguan Revolutionary Democratic Alliance, whose acronym means "burning" in Spanish), consisting of exiled former Sandinistan guerrillas, the most prominent of whom are "Commandante Zero" Eden Pastora, former junta member Alfonso Robelo and Miskito leader Brooklyn Rivera; 3) within Nicaragua itself, where a clandestine opposition

BULLETIN BOARD

by Donna DuVall



Costa Rican *contra* carries M16 rifle. Find out how Costa Rica is faring in Central American war in August's SOF.

of unknown strength but of growing intensity is currently operating in north/central Honduras.

For more information on Nicaragua and other Central American hotspots, read Mallin's articles beginning in next month's SOF, which will also feature a close look at the *contras* in Costa Rica by Jim Coyne.

MORE MIKE HOARE...

Phyllis Hoare reports that sales of books and patches have been brisk to SOF readers who are interested in contributing to the joint defense fund for Phyllis' husband, Mike, and the other six Seychelles veterans who are jailed in South Africa, and the five who have been sentenced to death in the Seychelles. Concerning the legal situation, however, things aren't as encouraging. Says Phyllis, "It looks as if time will just have to take its course."

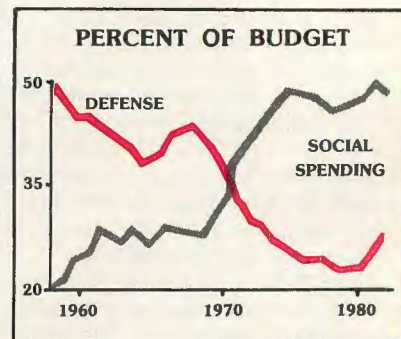
To help pay the tremendous legal expenses for all 12, the Hoares have been selling 5 Commando and Wild Geese patches and his book, *Congo*

Mercenary, for \$5 and \$12, respectively, surface-mailed. Hoare's new book, *Three Years with Sylvia*, an account of three-years' adventures aboard the Hoare's catamaran, *Sylvia*, is now available, and is being offered for \$25 (surface-mailed post-paid) with a 5 Commando patch as an extra bonus. The Wild Geese beret patch is \$4. To order or for more information, contact Phyllis Hoare, Box 441, Hilton, Natal, South Africa 3245.

A F JOURNAL EXTRA...

The *Armed Forces Journal* doesn't print many extras — in fact, in 120 years of publishing, it has printed just two. The first, in 1970 about a president trying to stop a war, was printed immediately after Nixon announced that U.S. and ARVN forces would attack enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia. The second, in March '83, is about a president trying to prevent a war.

In this most recent extra, AFJ thanks President Reagan and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger for releasing to the public the authoritative and chilling Defense study, *Soviet Military Power*. It also apologizes for prejudging the administration's '84 defense requests without having all the information. And the *Journal* reprints in its entirety the Defense booklet, *Soviet Military Power* because they feel it should be available to as many Americans as possible.



This study shows the effect of the unabated Soviet military buildup on the precarious military balance be-

tween NATO and Warsaw Pact nations, as well as U.S.-USSR balance. The Russians aren't cutting back and this book offers photographic proof of this, including the new Soviet T-80 tank which the *New York Times* called the "nonexistent tank" last year.

SOF strongly recommends *Soviet Military Power* as required reading before anyone decides on the president's proposed defense budget. AFJ is available by subscription only for \$19 per year. To see about buying single copies of the extra, contact AFJ, 1414 22nd St., NW, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20037 or (202) 296-0450.

COMRADE JAWS REASSIGNED...

SOF's Far East correspondent, Jim Coyne in Bangkok, got a surprise the other day when he saw among his mail a letter from the Russian Embassy. Upon opening it, he found an invitation to attend an Aeroflot anniversary party at the Soviet Embassy in Bangkok. Coyne considered what he had to gain from such an appearance, concluded that he had a lot more to lose and decided to decline the offer. "I didn't want to have to take my own glass, ice, whiskey and water," Coyne reasoned, "and I certainly wouldn't have used theirs or I might have wound up on the next Aeroflot flight to Moscow."

When calling in his regrets, Jim asked who had requested his presence, Anatoly Korolev? (See "Say Goodbye, Comrade Jaws," SOF April '83.) The embassy spokesman replied that Comrade Korolev had been reassigned — to parts unspecified.

"Funny," thought Coyne, "Anatoly didn't say anything about a reassignment coming up during our lunch."

RADIO FREE KABUL...

Radio Free Kabul was organized by Soviet exile Vladimir Bukovsky and French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, and has been in operation since November 1981. The broadcasts are in numerous local Afghan languages to give all Afghans the truth about the Soviets and their puppet government of Babrak Karmal, and in Russian to let the Russian soldiers know that they are considered an aggressive and illegal force in Afghanistan. The Russians were told by their government that they were invited to Afghanistan to help the Afghans fight American and Chinese aggressors.

The Soviets, masters of disinformation and propaganda, are fighting back against the success of the radio network. The Soviet-propped Karmal regime has offered a reward of 10,000

afghanis (\$200) to anyone providing information leading to the capture of a Radio Free Kabul transmitter. None has been captured so far.

To date, nine carefully hidden transmitters are broadcasting information and news to many parts of Afghanistan. But 24 additional transmitters, at a cost of \$2,000 each, are needed before all of Afghanistan can hear the truth.

Funding for Radio Free Kabul has come primarily from private British and French sources. The Committee for a Free Afghanistan is spearheading a drive for American contributions. Donations, which are tax-deductible, may be sent to Committee for a Free Afghanistan, Attn: Radio Free Kabul, 1237 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

PACHMAYR HUNTING SCHOOL...

"Mr. Shotgun," John Satterwhite, is the featured instructor at Pachmayr Hunting School, which has extensive 2½-day shooting courses for novice and veteran shooters.



SOF readers should be familiar with Satterwhite's accomplishments: twice Pan Am Gold Medalist, three-time International Skeet Shooting Champion and shooter in 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Through personalized tutoring, John will help shooters become totally familiar with the use of shotguns and the sport of hunting.

Pachmayr's school is located at Coto de Caza, Calif., 60 miles south of downtown Los Angeles and 25 miles from John Wayne Orange County Airport. For more information contact: Steve Yorba, Pachmayr Hunting School, 1220 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90015 (213) 748-7271.

POST-FALKLANDS FORCES...

The Falklands War's impact on British defense forces was readily apparent when Secretary of Defense John Nott presented the eagerly awaited "White Paper," an analysis of the war. The recommendations contained in the report's third section, "The Future," will reshape British forces into stronger, more easily deployable units.

The frontline of British defense is still NATO, the report emphasized, but it stressed also the need for an independent rapid-deployment force and special units that can perform specialized tasks. A Special Headquarters is recommended to coordinate the responsibilities of the units that operate beyond NATO's realm.

The new RDF will be developed around the 5th Infantry Brigade, which will be reinforced and made into an air-assault unit. Later it will add an armored recon regiment with light tankers and tank destroyers, an artillery regiment and a helicopter squadron.

The report endorsed the British decision to maintain a "sizable" presence on the Falklands, with Phantom, Harrier and Hercules aircraft; Chinook and Sea King helicopters and Rapier surface-to-air missiles.

As was expected and hoped, the report recommendations — which likely will be adopted — reversed the pre-Falklands defense trend toward reduction of force numbers and strength.

ANGOLA FREE BRITS?...

Paulo Jorge, the Angolan Foreign Minister, told British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that the seven British mercenaries jailed in Angola may be released before the end of 1983. Mrs. Thatcher asked for clemency for them.

The seven Britons were jailed in 1976 under sentences ranging from 16 to 30 years. Three other Britons and an American captured at the same time were executed. Jorge said that he hoped the Angolan president would see fit to return the Brits by the end of the year, but cited internal opposition to their release as one possible obstacle.

LUCKY LARRY IN LEBANON...

Soldier of Luck Larry Dring's (see "SF's Living Legend," February '82; "Ranger in Paradise," March '82; "Capt. Dring's Private Navy," April

Continued on page 87

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE is happy to announce that our 1983 CONVENTION will be held at the beautiful Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, 6-9 October 1983. Convention information is as follows:

THREE GUN MATCH: The world-famous Three Gun International Combat Shooting Match will be held at the Desert Sportsman Rifle & Pistol Club, 5-7 October. Entrance is by invitation only and competitors must write for application. This year 150 shooters will compete for \$50,000 in cash and prizes. Cash prizes will be given for 1st through 15th place; gifts will reward 16th through 25th place finishers (based on overall score). Minor prizes include cash awards for top-score Police, Military, Middle Man and First Time SOF Shooter. Cash awards and prizes for top five places in individual rifle, pistol and shotgun competition will also be given. Shooters entry fee is \$160, which also will include free entrance to all convention activities. All shooters wishing to bring a guest to the range must purchase a Range & Awards Ceremony Guest pass for \$35. Passes are limited to ONE per shooter and must be purchased in advance since they will not be on sale at the Convention nor to the public. Transportation to the range will be provided for all conventioners, shooters and guest. Shooters registration begins at 1200 hrs., Tuesday, 4 October in the Sahara Hotel Space Center Lobby.

CONVENTIONEERS: Pre-registration fee is \$100. This provides free admission to all activities and events, and includes one Awards Ceremony ticket. All convention activities, with the exception of the Military Arms Collector's Show, are closed to the public. Pre-registration forms must be *postmarked no later than 25 September 1983*. You may pick up your convention schedule and badge anytime between 1200 hrs. 4 October and 1400 hrs. 8 October 1983 at the Sahara Hotel Space Center. Requests for refunds must also be *postmarked NLT 25 September 1983*. ALL CONVENTIONEERS MUST PRE-REGISTER.

PARACHUTE JUMP SCHOOL: This year the Albuquerque Parachute Center will host the Parachute Jump School, 6th and 7th October 1983. Captain John Early, formerly Officer Commanding of the Selous Scouts Airborne Strike Force and Chief HALO Instructor for the Rhodesian Security Forces, will be heading the airborne operations along with many former instructors of the Rhodesian Para School. Upon completion of the first jump course, jumpers will be dispatched on a simulated operational fire force airborne assault. The first jump course will be \$120 per person. Cost for experienced jumpers will be \$50. *All jumpers must pre-register as a Conventioneer*. Experienced jumpers must have a copy of current military orders placing them on jump status or a current log book showing that they have jumped within the past 90 days. Experienced jumpers are encouraged to bring their own gear for free-fall mass jumps. Interested persons must send their *jump fee* to: Albuquerque Parachute Center, 2326 Don Felipe S.W., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105; *Conventioneer fees* should be sent to: SOF Convention, Inc., P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Three Gun Match	5-7 October
Seminars & Films	6-9 October
Military Arms & Collector's Show	7-9 October
Rhodesian Jump & Air Assault School	6-7 October
Firepower Demonstration	8 October
Awards Ceremony	8 October

Rooms are available at \$38 per room single or double occupancy at the HQ Hotel; the Sahara Hotel & Casino reservation line is 1 (800) 634-6666. Identify yourself as an SOF conventioneer.

Any additional convention questions or requests should be directed to:

Convention Director
P.O. Box 693
Boulder, CO 80306

or

Nadine Rick
Convention Assistant
(303) 449-3750

For travel and group airfare information:

A&B World Wide Travel
1021 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 443-6800

State that you are attending the SOF Convention.

MAIL TO: CONVENTION DIRECTOR, P.O. BOX 693, BOULDER, CO 80306

FIND MY CONVENTIONEER CHECK OR MONEY ORDER (\$100 per person). \$ _____
(List each Conventioneer's name, address & telephone number)

PLEASE SEND COMPETITIVE SHOOTER APPLICATION.

(GUN SHOW EXHIBITORS SEE FORM ON NEXT PAGE.)

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

***Pre-Registration form must be postmarked NLT 25 September 1983.**

THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE FOURTH ANNUAL MILITARY ARMS & COLLECTOR'S SHOW



ONE OF THE LARGEST EXHIBITIONS OF PARAMILITARY WEAPONS IN U.S.A.

EXHIBITORS SET-UP — THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 1000-1800 HRS.
OPEN TO PUBLIC — FRIDAY, 7 OCTOBER THRU SUNDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1000-2000 HRS.

The SOF Fourth Annual Military Arms & Collector's Show is being held in conjunction with the SOF Convention and Three Gun International Combat Shooting Match.

Table rates are \$75 per 6-foot table. Booth rates are \$150 per 8x10-foot booth with 8-foot-high back-drape, 3-foot-high side rails and company identification sign. Exhibitors Service Kits will be sent to all booth buyers.

Room reservations may be made by calling the Sahara Hotel reservation line at 1 (800) 634-6666. Identify yourself as a Soldier of Fortune Convention Exhibitor. Room rates are \$38 per single or double room.

Last year's SOF show featured 313 tables and booths. We will certainly exceed that in 1983. We urge you to reserve now. SEE YOU THERE!

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE MILITARY ARMS & COLLECTOR'S SHOW
P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306
(303) 449-3750

ALL TABLES WILL CONTAIN ONLY MILITARY ARMS, SURVIVAL GEAR, KNIVES, MILITARY SURPLUS & COLLECTIBLES, OR RELATED ITEMS.

I agree to abide by federal and state laws and the rules set by SOF Convention, Inc.
I understand that I am responsible for all tables in my name and I do not hold SOF Convention, Inc. responsible for my property.

Signature _____ Date _____

I wish to reserve _____ 6-ft. tables at \$75 ea. \$ _____

I wish to reserve _____ 8x10-ft. booths at \$150 ea. \$ _____

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I would like the following in my company to receive exhibitors badges:

Description of items: _____

RESERVATIONS AND REFUND REQUESTS NOT ACCEPTED UNLESS POSTMARKED NLT 25 SEPTEMBER 1983!

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*No. 1—SUMMER '75: U.S. Vietnam Vets Attempt To Fight For Saigon; CIA Assassination Of Trujillo; Col. Hoare & His Mercs In Angola.
 *No. 2—SPRING '76: War in Angola; Special Forces Desert Training; Cuban Invasion Plot.
 *No. 3—SUMMER '76: Hearst's PR Dept. Behind '54 Guatemalan Revolt; Mad Dog Callan: Merc Runs Amuck; Challenge of Deep Sea Diving.
 *No. 4—FALL '76: Vietnam Vet First American KIA in Angola; SOF Interviews CIC of Rhodesian Army; American Merc in Israel.
 *No. 5—WINTER '77: Ralph Thorsen: Modern Bounty Hunter; Terror in Beirut — An Inside Look At The PLO; SOF Interviews Sir Robert Thompson.
 *No. 6—SPRING '77: SOF Recon: Action in South Africa; NRA Survival School; Paramedics in Guatemala.
 No. 7—SEPT. '77: American Merc Destroys Cuban Espionage Ring; SAC: Errors in VN Airwar Operation, Part 1; Rhodesia: "Castle Keep."
 *No. 8—NOV. '77: South African Army Prepares for War; Israeli Defense Force; SOF Interviews Mike Echanis; SAC Errors in VN, Part 2.
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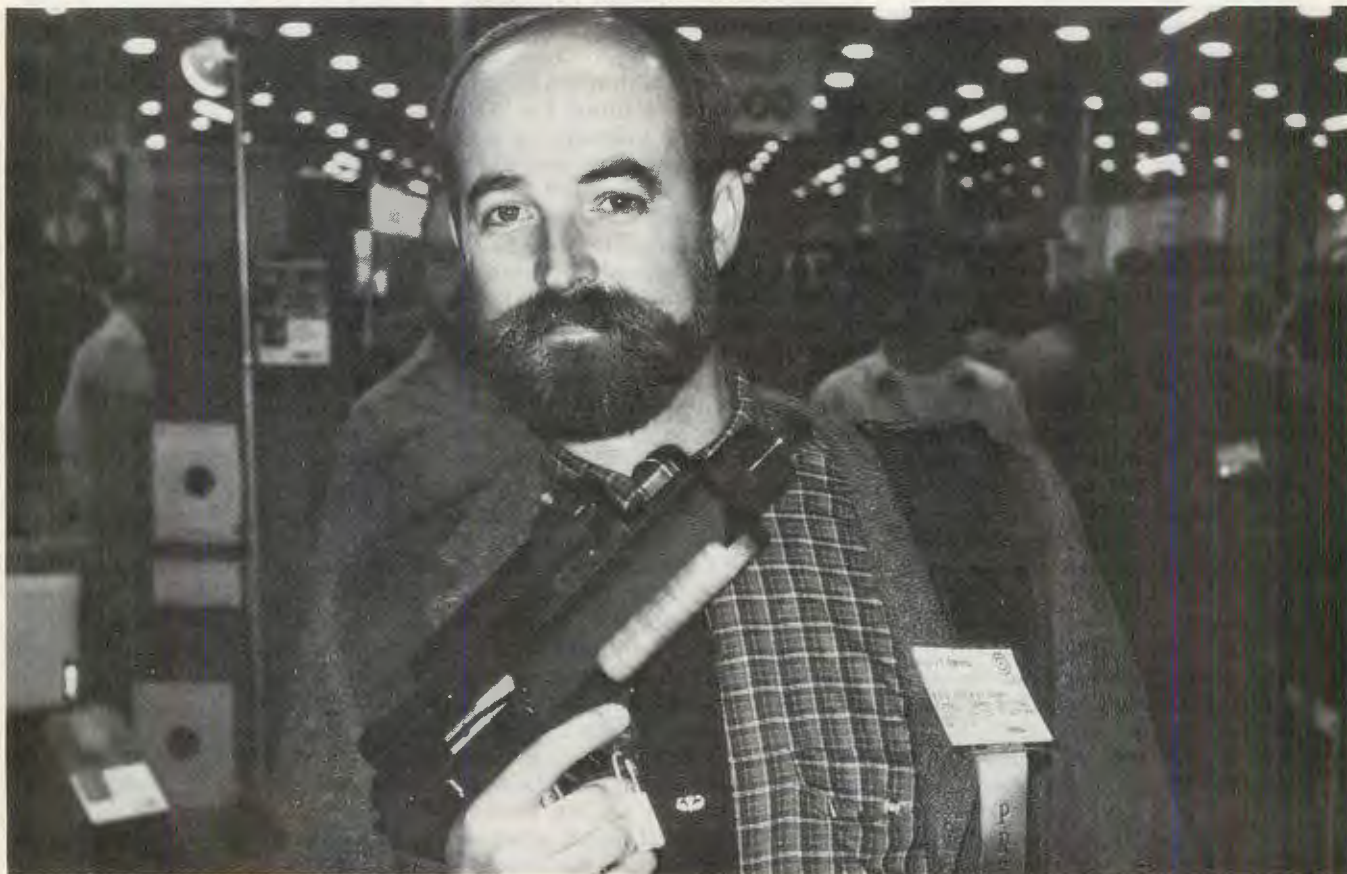
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PARTING SHOT

S.H.O.T. Show Handguns

by Ken Hackathorn

Photos by John Metzger



Ken Hackathorn looks at "Linda." This gun represents a new trend in pistol-marketing design. These "cut-down" submachine guns may be more show than go.

Dornaus and Dixon Enterprises show off Bren Ten 10mm pistol.

Detonics' prototype break-top revolver offers fast loading with use of high-pressure ammo. Gun should be produced next year.

THERE were few design surprises at this year's S.H.O.T. (Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade) Show in Dallas — undoubtedly largely because of the poor state of the economy.

The most interesting display of weaponry was the vast selection of 9mm Parabellum double-action service/duty-type auto pistols. Detonics' Pocket 9mm is a long way from production, but this 9mm Parabellum double-action that is the size of a PPK will be a big hit. Suggested retail price should be around \$450. Smith & Wesson showed off its new compact 9mm Parabellum, the M-469. It is basically a

Continued on page 64



EDITOR'S NOTE

Continued from page 2

Delta. Hoagland, in the Gritz version, was wounded, realized that he would be a liability to his team, and heroically shot himself so that they could leave him and not risk death or capture.

The man Gritz was referring to was S/Sgt. George A. Hoagland, who was killed in the An Lo Valley on 29 January 1966. Hoagland, part of a six-man Project Delta Recon team, was killed by a burst of machine-gun fire. He made no speeches (dying men rarely do) and did not kill himself — his left arm was shot off and his right was almost severed. We know this because there was a survivor from the team, Charles F. Hiner. Hiner, together with the commanding officer of Project Delta at the time, Charles M. "Charging Charlie" Beckwith, and the man who led the reaction team to rescue Hiner, Sgt. Maj. Walt Shumate, all agree Gritz was not there that day.

Why the lie? Gritz has given two answers: He has said he used Hoagland as one would use a common name like "Smith" or "Brown"; later he told SOF he wasn't talking about Hoagland at all. It was another man, another time, another place. He has not said who, when or where.

It's one thing to BS some blonde in a bar about mythical war stories, it's another thing altogether to use a lie like that to raise funds from vulnerable families.

Although better financed, Gritz's latest try, Operation Lazarus, was flawed like its predecessors: It was neither backed nor supported by the government, the personnel involved were generally inexperienced, the intelligence was at best shaky and the operational plan hopeless.

Essentially, Gritz went to Thailand, where he met with various Free Laotian guerrilla groups, obtained the assistance of two, who provided him with intelligence and said that they would provide support troops for an assault on a suspected POW camp.

If one accepts the Gritz version, he and his various team members and Free Lao guerrillas crossed into Laos three times: 27 November to 3 December, 9 to 27 December 1982 and 30 January to 27 February 1983.

On his first mission Gritz crossed the Mekong with three other Americans, four weapons (three semiautomatic UzIs and one pistol) and 15

Laotians, working for Gen. Phoumi Nosovan. Three days and possibly 60 clicks into Laos the party was ambushed. After a rapid retreat, 12 Laotians and three Americans came out on 3 December.

All members of the team were uncertain who had ambushed them in Laos — including Gritz, who, in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* in early January, said it was the Pathet Lao.

There are actually two candidates for the dirty deed. One is a Free Lao guerrilla known as Capt. Lima, who works for Gen. Kham Bou, who works for Gen. Khong Le. The theory as to why Lima/Kham Bou would do it holds that because Gritz was originally scheduled to go across with them but didn't, they wanted to teach him a lesson — also they hate Phoumi Nosovan. Another variant on that theory is that Lima did it on his own because he wanted the \$1.2 million in equipment and cash in Gritz's possession.

The other candidate is Gen. Phoumi Nosovan himself. As one old Asia hand put it: "He is the only man in Southeast Asia venal enough to ambush himself for money." The general swears he is innocent and that Khong Le did it. As our man on the scene said: "That's a liar, cheat and thief, calling a liar, cheat and thief a liar, cheat and thief."

Back in their Thai forward operating base, Nakhon Phanom, the team licked its wounds in early December and started falling apart. Several team members left in early December and returned to the United States while Gritz and another American went back in. Not much is known about the second trip, except for the Gritz version — which is that he went back in and linked up with Gen. Kham Bou, whom he has since labeled the "Simon Bolivar" of his country.

Soldier of Fortune entered the scene on 21 December when one of our Asia watchers in Thailand called and told us that some Americans had crossed over the Mekong, got ambushed, lost one man, were separated and stumbling around in the bush broadcasting in the clear.

Within a day we had determined that the operation was Gritz's and that the unaccounted-for man was Dominick Zappone. We did several things at that point. First, we called the proper authorities in the government and said, "Hey, if you didn't

definitely have an MIA before, you have one now." They replied, "We know." We dispatched Coyne to Thailand and started our work on putting the story together.

Although we knew about previous Gritz operations — and had never printed one word about them — we decided from the beginning of the Operation Lazarus fiasco that as soon as Zappone's status was determined, either safe in Thailand or known to be in communist hands, we would print this time. If there is anything America does not need, it is another American unaccounted for.

We operated on that basis for the next 30-plus days. During that time one of Gritz's team members, who had broken away from the operation, came to us and briefed us on his version of what had happened. We agreed to buy his story once our conditions for publishing had been met — that is, as soon as Zappone's status was resolved.

After talking with Chuck Patterson, we suspected Gritz's team had probably not been hit by the Pathet Lao but rather by Free Lao guerrillas who had decided to do a little "bandit" freelancing or had run into the group by accident. We asked a person who was headed for Thailand — someone with a working knowledge of all the Laotian players — to either negotiate or buy out Zappone, up to \$10,000, at his discretion — if more was required, call us.

We also asked him to hand-deliver to Coyne a copy of the Patterson transcripts, Gritz's SitRep and a summary of what we knew up to that time. We didn't want anything going via courier and therefore through Thai customs.

Our man left for Asia in mid-January, with planned business stops at various points in the Pacific.

SOF learned during the final week of January that Zappone had come out, either on his own or because of a reported ransom paid to the Free Lao. But at any rate, he was definitely out; this was confirmed by Rear Adm. Allen G. Paulson, of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Despite claims by Gritz, based on a distortion of a conversation he had with Coyne at a later date, that is all we were told by DIA. That was one we were owed because we had sat very tightly on the story from 21 December until late January, a time when all parties thought there was a

chance the Pathet Lao could snap up a stray American in Laos.

SOF also learned in late January that Alan Dawson of *The Bangkok Post* was aware of the November crossing and its outcome and was going to print it on 31 January.

SOF elected to provide the story to an American reporter and an American newspaper at that time.

So the world learned that Gritz had gone into Laos in November and stepped in it.

Gritz meanwhile had gone back to Thailand, this time with six other Americans, including two women, and had crossed back into Laos on the night of 30 January with two other team members, Gary Goldman and Scott Weekly, a day ahead of the scheduled departure.

In the Gritz version, he says he immediately noticed increased enemy activity almost as soon as he crossed and then got a message on 4 February, which said: "The whole world knows and is watching." From other participants, we know the bit about the radio message is accurate.

From that point, the story becomes what we call "Classic Gritz." He says a runner caught up to him in the middle of Laos on 7 February and at that time he learned Patterson had talked to SOF, giving us Gritz's latest mission and target information, which was made available to the *Bangkok Post*, and that Coyne had given the same info to *Voice of America*, which broadcast it in Laotian on 31 January.

Gritz's story has several holes:

The Patterson information was in the hands of our courier, not with Coyne, until 31 January. Our courier was in Bangkok, but did not contact Coyne until he saw the story in the *Bangkok Post*. Remember our courier, who was out of the information net, didn't know Zappone was out.

The *Bangkok Post* article was based on Thai intel sources and Free Lao accounts and differed substantially from the Patterson version released in the States. For example, the 31 January *Bangkok Post* article said the team crossed on 17 November, went eight kilometers, was ambushed on 28 November by Gen. Kouprasith Abhay — he hates both Nosovan and Kham Bou — and was headed for a suspected POW camp in Vietnam. The *Voice of America* broadcast was, according to VOA's

Bangkok spokesman, a pick-up from the *Bangkok Post* article and the transcript of the broadcast which SOF has read supports this.

Interestingly, and very significantly, neither the *Bangkok Post* nor the *Voice of America* mentioned Patterson or *Soldier of Fortune* in their 31 January releases.

However, the *Bangkok Post* did mention SOF on 6 February, because after the story broke I authorized Coyne to show Dawson the Patterson transcript and he wrote a followup story based on the transcripts that day.

Which brings us to Gritz's runner: Remember the panting runner who caught up with him on 7 February with the news that Patterson had talked to SOF, which had "traitorously" told the world?

Hmmm. From the Mekong to the middle of Laos, it's about 100 clicks as the B-52 flies — and don't forget through heavy Pathet Lao and Vietnamese patrols — in one day (6 February to 7 February).

Wish I had been on the banks of the Mekong when that runner took off with his copy of the *Bangkok Post*. Shucks, that feller must have been so fast that he took the mile-wide Mekong in one stride — and I'll bet the trail he cut through 100 miles of Laotian bush is still smoking.

That one just won't wash, Bo.

The rest of the Gritz account of his Laotian foray is full of typical Gritz-type derring-do, heroics and narrow escapes from the jaws of the enemy. Since we have not talked with any uninvolved parties, we'll reserve comment on that portion.

So how did Gritz's operation get blown? Why were the Pathet Lao and Vietnamese waiting for him?

You have to start with the fire fight of 30 November and all the rumors that went out on the "bamboo telephone" after that — on both sides of the Mekong.

The Free Lao up and down the river — and on both sides — were talking about it: And some of the Free Lao, as one might expect, are Pathet Lao keeping tabs on the opposition.

The American Embassy in Bangkok knew — presumably they had their ears on and were listening. (Patterson was warned by the resident DIA man as early as 12 December about violations of the Neutrality Act.)

The American expatriate community on Pat Pong knew. The "girls" had told them. Gritz and crew had stopped there en route to Nakhon Phanom, prior to both the November and the January missions.

Thai intel knew. Turns out they had been running a cross-border operation into Laos in November-December which was blown by the fire-works of 30 November and the ensuing increase in communist activity. It was probably Thai intel that got Zappone out since they passed the word to all the Free Lao that whoever was holding him had better get the white man out of Laos or else — and I assure you when Thai intel says, "Or else," they are not kidding.

Most of the residents of Nakhon Phanom knew. The giveaway in NKP were the two girls — who insisted on wearing their "POWs Never Have A Nice Day" T-Shirts around town; one, Lynn Standerwick, was passing out business cards which read: F.A.N.S., Inc., Forgotten Americans Need Support. And while it is hard to believe, Gritz was still talking with Phoumi Nosovan's people in late January.

The KGB knew — and through them presumably the Vietnamese knew. During the last week of January, two members of the Gritz team spotted a "white man" across the street from the the safehouse in NKP. The "white man" was photographing team members going and coming. SOF has learned the "white man" is a non-Russian KGB informant.

The military authorities in Vientiane, Laos, knew. Either as a result of the fire fight on 30 November or as a result of the rumors of a "white man" stranded in Laos, the Vietnamese moved additional troops into the area of Route 9 in December and January. Thai intel picked up the radio traffic of the additional units and radio intercepts in early January — and prior to 31 January learned from those intercepts that the communist patrols were advised to "be on the lookout for 'white men' trying to infiltrate Laos."

When his troops back in NKP sent Gritz the "the-whole-world-knows" message they probably didn't know how accurate they were.

✕

THREE BATTLES

Part 1: Operation Hastings — Marines Stop NVA in I Corps

by Edward Doyle

Photos courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps



It is quite possible that a couple of Vietnam veterans, strangers, could meet, begin reminiscing about the war and while doing so, wonder which war the other was talking about, so different could be their recollections. For Vietnam was several wars, and often no two of them were even remotely alike.

There was I Corps (for much of the war strictly Marine country — and it was called so): jungle, rice paddies, steep hills that bordered upon being mountains but were not quite. And there was the Demilitarized Zone, the DMZ, where North Vietnamese Commanding Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap thought he would bring the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. He did not include in his plans the fierce resistance he would encounter from the United States Marines.

Marine from G Company, 2/4 runs for cover as NVA soldiers open up with 12.7mm heavy machine gun. Action is in Quang Tri Province, northwest of Dong Ha. Marine is armed with M14, the standard weapon for Marine riflemen at the time.

Sorry about that, Giap. Must change plan. Threw off your and Uncle Ho's timetable for a few years.

Just below I Corps lay II Corps. Its terrain doubtless was the most strikingly varied, ranging from the sandy shores of the South China Sea to the mountains — real mountains — west of Pleiku. Here, too, Giap and Ho sought an early and hopefully abrupt conclusion to the war: Cut South Vietnam in two, let the northern half wither on the vine and strike out southward toward Saigon, the capital.

End of war. They did just that, ultimately. But not when the Americans, including the First Cavalry Division (Airmobile) hung out there. Giap and Uncle Ho learned a lot about fighting airmobile troops, particularly those with the spirit, courage and dash of the First Cav, at places like Chu Pong Mountain, Ia Drang Valley and An Thi in II Corps.

Three Corps, the Saigon Capital Region: mostly level, or reasonably so, land here but swamps, nearly impenetrable jungle and tunnel networks like ant-hills full of well-motivated "Hard Hat" Viet Cong regulars. Troops from outfits like the First Infantry Division, The Big Red One, and the 173rd Airborne Brigade, however, kept the VC on the defensive — while they were there.

Finally, there was IV Corps — the

Delta. A mass of rivers, canals and unbelievable swamps full to the brim with snakes, leeches and other unpleasant creepy crawlies that helped, along with some more very tough VC, to make life almost unendurable for GIs, principally the U.S. Ninth Infantry Division, and the Navy's Riverine Force.

Many other outfits fought in Vietnam, and even inside each Corps area, men who served there found circumstances unlike those encountered by others only a few miles away. But each of the four Corps areas had an overall personality.

In the following two-part series, SOF will depict with stark clarity what life was like in The 'Nam from the Delta to the DMZ.

Part I concerns Operation Hastings in which the Marines played the role of spoilers to Gen. Giap's effort to attain victory in the northern quarter of South Vietnam. Part II takes the reader into the jungles and tunnels beneath them of the Capital Military Region — and reveals what it was like to be "walking in oatmeal" down in the stifling, humid Delta. In March and April, SOF ran a two-part series that took the reader atop Chu Pong Mountain and down into the Ia Drang Valley, II Corps' valley of death — for the North Vietnamese. If there was a Little Big Horn in that valley, it was Charlie's, not the Seventh Cav's.

—Bob Poos

IN 1964, during his election campaign, Lyndon B. Johnson affirmed his conviction that "American boys" should not "do the fighting for Asian boys." Now, in June 1966, 285,000 American troops were on combat duty in South Vietnam. And another 100,000 would be pouring in by the year's end. With draft calls rapidly approaching 45,000 men per month — largest quota since the Korean War — there seemed no end in sight.

Through 1966 and '67, Americans would read newspaper accounts of American military operations like Mash-er-White Wing-Eagle, Malheur, Attleboro and Birmingham to name only a few. Yet few of those would be the dramatic, set-piece battles Americans were familiar with from World War II and Korea. For Vietnam, above all, would be a war of no fronts. All of South Vietnam would eventually become the battlefield: the dense jungle and rugged hills near the DMZ, the wetlands and nearly impenetrable forests north of Saigon, and the myriad waterways and rice paddies of the Mekong Delta. In these diverse and hostile environments, Gen.

H & S Co., 2/4 Marines move through thick elephant grass, which in some places was more than the Marines, a few miles south of the DMZ between NV and the Republic of Vietnam.



William C. Westmoreland calculated his "big-war" strategy of attrition, search and destroy could work. Application of that strategy was demonstrated, in part, by three of Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV's) efforts in South Vietnam: Operation Hastings near the DMZ (discussed below); Cedar Falls in the Iron Triangle northwest of Saigon and Coronado V, a riverine operation in the Mekong Delta (to be discussed next month).

Seventeen May 1966. After a three-hour truck ride and night march from the North Vietnamese coastal town of Vinh Linh, 200 NVA (North Vietnamese Army) soldiers waded across a shallow section of the Ben Hai River, demarca-

tion line dividing North from South Vietnam. Once across, the soldiers followed a narrow jungle trail through the lower half of the six-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Their mission was not to fight but to reconnoiter and survey four districts in central and eastern Quang Tri Province. And they knew something big was in the works: an invasion of Quang Tri by the 10,000 men of NVA Division 324B to annihilate the South Vietnamese First Division, assigned to defend the province.

Division 324B, commanded by Gen. Nguyen Vang, was a relatively new unit, untested in battle. It had been formed a year earlier, brought up to strength with draftees and trained for combat. Despite

his men's lack of experience, Gen. Vang was confident they would acquit themselves well against the South Vietnamese or, if need be, the Americans. Each was armed with a Chinese-made AK-47 rifle, 100 rounds of ammunition and grenades. Russian submachine guns, mortars, anti-tank guns and rockets added power to their offense. Even after recent setbacks in South Vietnam, NVA morale was high. A song on Radio Hanoi summed up the soldiers' mood:

*"Yankee, I swear to you
With words sharp as knives
Here in Vietnam, it is either you or me
And I am already here
So you must go!"*

The political and military crisis affect-



ing Quang Tri and other northern provinces of South Vietnam in that spring of 1966 apparently made it ripe for takeover. Since March, hostilities between Buddhists and the government had paralyzed the military and weakened I-Corps' defenses. Non-communist areas of Quang Tri and Thua Thien had been held by dissident ARVN units in sympathy with Buddhist factions. The North Vietnamese proceeded with customary caution, organizing a complicated logistics effort to "prepare the battlefield." Lacking anything comparable to U.S. air mobility to resupply troops already in the field, the NVA had to establish advance logistical bases with food and armaments for incoming troops.

The NVA primarily relied on Viet Cong (VC) allies already in Quang Tri to collect and store rice. But Gen. Vang, poised to cross the Ben Hai River, discovered that his VC supply unit had not done its job. Reconnaissance reported that rice depots were few in number and poorly stocked. Because of this situation, Division 324B's mission was delayed while several of its battalions shuttled back and forth to North Vietnam for rice. While 324B stood stalled in the DMZ, American commanders monitored its activity and speculated about its intentions.

The unprecedented infiltration of the DMZ by an NVA division created a stir at MACV headquarters in Saigon. The

spectre of an invasion, Korean-style, across the DMZ had preoccupied American and South Vietnamese commanders since 1954. To Gen. Westmoreland in the spring of 1966, such aggression appeared imminent. Back in February, he had told President Johnson and Premier Ky that if he were NVA Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap he "would strike into Quang Tri . . . to seek a quick victory."

In the ensuing months, MACV, at the war rooms in Saigon, compiled data on NVA activity near the DMZ, indicating that an invasion was in the offing. By May, Vietnamese agents were tracking 324B's movements through the DMZ. Aerial observers spotted troops and trucks in the eastern sector of the zone



On their way, H Co., 2/4 Marines move across rolling hills to helicopters at beginning of Hastings.

and infrared aerial photographs revealed nighttime fires in the jungle and probable encampments. A lucky break provided further evidence when an NVA soldier surrendered to an ARVN outpost and disclosed preparations for 324B's invasion.

Still, Westmoreland was unwilling to mobilize his forces and commit them to immediate counterattack. He later remarked: "I didn't want to react too quickly, and I wanted to be sure we had enough intelligence to guide us I had to have more intelligence on what was going on up North, and there was no better way to get at it than by sending in reconnaissance elements in force."

The Marines, whose tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) included Quang Tri, shared MACV's concern about the NVA build-up in the North. But they disagreed with MACV that the build-up constituted preparation for an all-out invasion of Quang Tri and Thua Thien. Some Marine estimates suggested that an invasion was unlikely because of the insurmountable logistics and supply problems a division-size NVA force would incur.

Several Marine commanders also speculated that NVA Division 324B was bait to lure the Marines' limited forces away from their successful clear-and-hold pacification efforts near Da Nang and bog them down indefinitely in a static defense of the DMZ. While acknowledging the Marines' progress in pacification, Westmoreland was impatient with their stubborn devotion to it. To spur them to action, Westmoreland ordered Lt. Gen. Lewis W. Walt's Marines to conduct the reconnaissance needed for ascertaining the purpose and scope of NVA infiltration into Quang Tri.

On 1 July, a few minutes before nightfall, Marine Lt. Terry Terrebone and a dozen other Marines, their faces blackened with grease, carefully checked gear and weapons on the airstrip at Dong Ha. After boarding two Chinook-46 helicopters, they headed in a northeasterly direction. Their destination: two miles south of the DMZ, at a junction of two known infiltration trails. Their mission: to locate 324B.

Terrebone was not optimistic about contacting 324B in the thickly wooded foothills below the DMZ: "We intended to stay 48 hours [and] find out what we could." He and his men were in for a nasty surprise. They were on the ground *only 20 minutes*, when 50 NVA soldiers approached from over a ridge. The NVA, wearing green uniforms and carrying automatic weapons, quickly moved to surround the Marines. Scrambling back to the landing zone, Terrebone called for helicopter gunships and waited to be picked up while the NVA encircled the LZ only 50 yards away: "They were holding their fire, which showed good discipline. Ten minutes



PHONE FLASH

by Bob Poos

The military telephone system in Vietnam, at best undependable and at worst hopeless, at the time had transmission priorities ranging from "Flash" to "Urgent" to "Priority" to "Routine."

(Combat news correspondents in Vietnam added their own: "Press priority." It was a meaningless term but sometimes impressed a green telephone operator, who would place it ahead of routine calls.)

One day shortly before Operation Hastings was launched, a British correspondent, new in-country, caused a brief but tumultuous stir at Da Nang and, for that matter, throughout South Vietnam's military circles.

The newsman, as yet unfamiliar with proper communications procedures, picked up a phone at the Marines' Combat Information Bureau in Da Nang, and brightly, in his finest British accent, chirped to the Da Nang Switch operator: "I say, old chap, I'd like to flash Saigon." Now the word "Flash" could indicate a number of things, among them that hordes of North Vietnamese were, in-

deed, pouring over the DMZ.

Operators along the way broke all records in getting the message to Tiger Switch in Saigon. Upon reaching it, the young man innocently asked to be connected to his news bureau and was.

But, also along the way, operators, probably envisioning themselves being bayoneted at their switchboards, passed the word to everyone they could reach.

Briefly, an awful lot of people in Vietnam thought that hundreds of thousands of fierce, ruthless, little brown soldiers would soon be upon their doorsteps.

Harassed Marine PIO officers quickly cleared up the mistake, to everyone's relief.

I happened to be standing behind the Briton, awaiting my turn at the phone when he spoke the fateful words.

Being neither young, new in-country nor unfamiliar with procedures, I knew *exactly* what was going to happen. My story destined for AP headquarters in Saigon was not really all that important. I turned, walked to the CIB bar and ordered a drink. A triple.

later, two A-4 Skyhawks and another helicopter gunship arrived. They sprayed the area with heavy fire, and received automatic-weapons fire in return. Two CH-46s were right behind them, and they came down and lifted us off."

Terrebone's reconnaissance party checked out several other sites over the next two weeks. Besides spotting 350 NVA regulars, the Marines sighted fortifications, including mortar pits, trench lines and fox holes. Gen. Walt concluded, "Gen. Giap and Ho Chi Minh had decided to slug it out with us." Westmoreland "was now convinced that the better part of 324B had moved across the DMZ . . . We knew what we had and we knew what we were able to do with it."

Gen. Westmoreland swiftly ordered Walt to ready as many as seven Marine infantry battalions (8,000 men) to stop 324B. Reinforced by five ARVN infantry and airborne battalions (3,000 men), backed by artillery and aircraft, and

Grunts from 3 Battalion, 4th Marines assault up a steep hill against NVA positions following bombing, strafing and napalm runs by 1st Marine Airwing aircraft. Operation Hastings, which lasted 10 days, took place within six miles of DMZ.

Fourth Regiment Marines wade jungle stream to link up with other elements of their battalion. Grunt on the left has the line company work horse — M60 machine gun.

covered by long-range guns of the U.S. fleet, Walt's Marines fanned out in mid-July toward the DMZ. Operation Hastings, the largest Marine operation up to that time, was underway.

The Marines had embarked on one of their first major operations near the DMZ. The conditions of the battlefield could not have been less favorable. Mountains make up roughly half of Quang Tri, dropping off eastward into foothills separated from the sea by a thin stretch of paddy land and sandy beaches. The hill the Marines called the "Rockpile," with sheer cliffs straight up and down, dominates some relatively flat terrain just north of the Cam Lo River. An almost impenetrable jungle blankets Quang Tri's razor-backed ridges with thick brush topped by a double canopy of deciduous trees, one 30 feet high and the other 100. So thick was the canopy that, according to one observer, "bombs explode harmlessly" on it.

Hastings was commanded by Brig. Gen. Lowell English, a combat veteran of WWII and Korea. His battle plan was to repulse NVA penetration by cutting access to two key infiltration trails converging some four miles below the DMZ. He deemed control of the Rockpile, overlooking the entire operational area, a particularly important objective. Aggressiveness was the crux of English's plan, to take "the enemy by surprise on his key trails and behind his own lines and to smash and destroy him before he



Marines of Lima, 3/5 load wounded men of I Company aboard H-34 medical-evacuation helicopter. The 10-hour battle occurred on 24 July '66, was part of one of largest operations of Vietnam War.

had a chance to regain his balance and his momentum."

That the Marines were coming after them, however, would be no secret to the North Vietnamese. For three days before Hastings, B-52s pounded the trails, hillsides and ravines near the DMZ to "soften up" NVA entrenchments. Meanwhile, on a broad plain west of Dong Ha, staging area for the operation, huge four-engine aircraft disgorged a million pounds of supplies



and equipment. As the planes skimmed runways, rose-colored dust clouds billowed into the sky, a portent surely not missed by the men of 324B.

On 15 July at first light, a squadron of CH-46 helicopters, resembling mammoth grasshoppers, lifted off from Dong Ha with members of the 3rd Battalion of the 4th Marine Regiment of the 3rd Marine Division (3/4/3). Their operational zone was the Song Ngan Valley, five miles northeast of the Rockpile and within rifle range of the DMZ. The first wave of choppers set down without incident. But sniper fire ended hope for a quiet landing as the second wave swooped toward the LZ.

The third wave met disaster. In an LZ choked by jungle, two helicopters collided and crashed. A third, trying to avoid them, rammed into a tree, killing two Marines and injuring seven. Snipers downed one more. Lt. Col. Sumner Vale, the battalion commander, remembers the grisly sight of several panicked Marines being slashed to death "by the helicopter blades as they were getting out of the helicopter." The Song Ngan Valley earned that day an infamous place in Marine lore as "Helicopter Valley." It was an ominous beginning.

"Helicopter Valley" Marked Hastings' Ominous Beginning

Vale's 3rd Battalion initiated a sweep through the valley, while the 2nd Battalion landed at the other end about three miles to the northeast. The 3rd was to serve as a blocking force on a suspected infiltration route. The 2nd, commanded by Lt. Col. Arnold Bench, moved southwest to take Hill 208 overlooking the 3rd's position. Almost impassable jungle combined with oppressive heat slowed the 2nd's progress to a crawl. By midafternoon it had barely covered two miles. Capt. J.W. Hilgers vividly recalls the difficulty of negotiating the terrain, particularly the thick vegetation: "Though we knew our location, we could not see where we were going, trusting only to our compasses. The heat with no breeze and unlimited humidity was devastating."

Delays erased whatever tactical surprise Gen. English had counted on. And the Marine battalions, now isolated behind NVA advance positions, were quickly thrown on the defensive. At 1600 hours Vale radioed, after unsuccessfully trying to cross the Song Ngan River, that his men were "under heavy fire" and "in trouble." By 1930 the 3rd was surrounded, awaiting the inevitable NVA night attack. It did not have to wait long. ☠





LEFT: Marines hug ground as NV fire knee-high over their positions some 2,000 yards south of DMZ on 17 July. Marines were spearheading drive against NV troops believed to be in Song Ngan Valley. Photo: Wide World Photos Inc. **ABOVE:** Marines from 3rd Division landing one mile from DMZ during Hastings, the multi-battalion operation which began 15 July and ended 25 July with thousands of NV dead and tons of ammunition and medical supplies captured. **BELOW:** A Marine from 3/4, whose face was creased by enemy bullet, pours water into mouth of buddy who was felled by heat. AP Photo





Sgt. Chuck Simmons, a scout for the 2/4 Marines, pulls hidden ChiCom grenades from streambed in Quang Tri Province, northwest of Dong Ha.

Shortly after 2000 hours, an NVA company tried to overrun Company K's position, igniting a wild three-hour fire fight.

"It was so dark," said Capt. Robert Modrzejewski, "we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces, so we threw out trip flares and called for a flare plane overhead. We could hear and smell and occasionally see the NVA after that. When the firing stopped, we heard them dragging bodies of their dead away, but in the morning, at the first light, we found 25 bodies On the basis of the dragging we had heard we figured we got another 30 of them, which we listed as probably killed."

The 3rd's problems were not over. The next evening, still unable to ford the river, the Marines dug in while the NVA picked up where they left off, lobbing mortars at their perimeter. At this point, the 2nd Battalion changed its direction of advance to assist the 3rd. When it finally did reach Vale's unit, the 2nd, too, was pinned down by intense mortar attacks. The Marines returned fire, directing ear-shattering air and artillery strikes to within a few hundred yards of their own positions, and killed 100 of the enemy, some at close range with pistols and even bayonets. After two more days of incessant bombardment, the 2nd and 3rd got new orders: pull out.

In the early afternoon of 18 July, Vale and Bench moved their units toward the eastern end of the valley. Capt. Modrzejewski's battle-weary Company K stayed behind to destroy the crippled helicopters at the LZ. The NVA, instead of pursuing the main body, massed to attack Company K. Around 1430, several hundred NVA infantrymen charged the LZ, blowing bugles and whistles and waving flags. Company K stubbornly held its ground. The 1st Platoon, cut off in the confusion, bore the assault's full brunt. "Every guy in the 1st Platoon thought it was all over when those bugles started blowing," said Cpl. Paul Gels. First Plt. Sgt. John McGinty and his rifle squads threw everything they had at the NVA force but it was not enough: "We started getting mortar fire, followed by automatic weapons fire from all sides [Charlie] moved in with small arms right behind the mortars . . . we just couldn't kill them fast enough."

Continued on page 68



Weapons and equipment captured by Marines of E Company, 2/1 during Operation Hastings just south of 17th Parallel. Included are an AK-47, a Chinese SKS, clothing, Chinese stick grenades, NVA tennis shoe, a pouch of sticky rice and some web gear, leather and cloth.



INSIDE FREE ANGOLA

SOF Evaluates Savimbi's Rebel State

Text & Photos by Rick Venable

Supporter runs up UNITA flag (a rooster crowing beneath the rising sun)
during a celebration at Jamba, Jonas Savimbi's main base city.



JAMBA — This place is big. We bounced through the main gate in a captured Russian truck, saluted the guard and rumbled along a street neatly bordered with a rail fence. Long barracks-huts were everywhere in neat rows. We glimpsed a big grinder with a reviewing stand, a huge drill field, guest houses, any number of trucks. Jamba is Jonas Savimbi's main base. Just a glance at it is enough to convince you that UNITA (National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola) is a hell of a lot more than a ragtag bunch of guerrillas. They are running something close to a country here.

Our orderly took us to our hut. "Hut" is not the right word, conveying as it does a shabby pile of sticks and grass. African huts are sturdy, cool and durable, and often have elaborate internal walls and ornamental pillars of grass. Two soldiers assigned to us brought pans of water and bars of soap, and we washed two days of road dust off our faces. At last we would be able to stay in one place for a while.

The next few days pounded home the main lesson of this trip as far as I was concerned: If the world or the U.S. State Department thinks that UNITA is going to go away, or doesn't amount to anything, they are wrong.

Right after lunch, for example, a Russian staff car picked us up and carried us several miles to UNITA's secretarial school. I can't think of anything more fun than riding in a captured Russian staff car. We went into a big building and, sure enough, there were 20 girls practicing typing. The typewriters were a crazy collection of manual models running from the \$50 kind I used to lose every week in Cambodia to big legal-size machines. Not only were the girls typing, but they were accurate:



I looked. When a guerrilla army needs that many secretaries, it is no longer a minor operation.

Later we went to an elementary school where local kids were learning arithmetic. Portuguese is enough like Spanish that I could make out some of the problems: "Three hundred Cubans came to oppress our people. Our soldiers killed 47. How many . . ." A



ABOVE: Physical training DIs look the same everywhere in the world, where the army is good. This one is giving young recruits the works in a remote base camp. UPPER RIGHT: An army wins wars on strength of its feet. Young recruits for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA army pound the parade deck in a remote base camp during morning calisthenics.



A parade African style. While native drummers and dancers go through routine, UNITA soldiers in background wait their turn to march. To the right in the background are captured Russian 76mm ZIS-3 Divisional Guns (range 13,290 meters), a tripod-mounted B10 82mm Recoilless gun (range 4,500 meters) and a tripod-mounted B11 107mm Recoilless Gun (range 6,650 meters).



school is not an army operation, but a government one. That is the point. UNITA controls its territory firmly enough — both militarily and civilly — and knows what it wants to do after it wins, that it is getting started now. Guerrilla armies often collapse when they suddenly have to organize a day-to-day government. I don't think UNITA will.

Not far from the school is a large grass museum containing the remains of an Antonov-26, a Russian transport that UNITA downed with a SAM-7. They captured the pilots. According to Savimbi's people, the Soviets then lost their enthusiasm for sending planes into UNITA's territory. At any rate, UNITA did a number on the Antonov. I have never seen one plane in so many small pieces.

When we went to the ordnance-repair depot, we knew — absolutely

knew — that Ivan had stepped on it this time. When you find that a guerrilla bush army has a half-dozen electronically controlled machine tools . . . well, you know that the other side isn't doing as well as it might. We saw a working computerized lathe, a planing and milling machine, drill presses, grinders and so on. The shop foreman showed us a freshly made part that I couldn't identify.


"This is for a 12.7mm machine gun," he said. "When the Cubans see that they are about to get overrun, they remove this part and throw it away. Without it, we couldn't use the gun. So now we just make our own."

SOF's Venable said UNITA's weapons instructors are no different from those all over the world, in that they can disassemble a weapon in 11 seconds in a barrel of molasses with their toes. This one is teaching fine points of the AK-47. Classes are taught in Portuguese, a common language for most Angolans.



Fidel Castro's Cuban mercenaries and Angola's communist troops have taken to throwing away critical parts of 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns if they see they are going to be captured. Jonas Savimbi's UNITA gunsmiths just make replacement parts and issue weapons back to troops.





Next to the repair shop was a barn-like shelter full of heavy machine guns waiting for deployment. Another building had rocket launchers stacked like cordwood. In the park nearby were a BRDM II and a Russian armored car that I couldn't identify. The crew cranked up the BRDM II to show that they had it working and drove us around in it.

"We can't use it in combat," an officer said. "One vehicle is no good against air power and concentrated armor. I guess we just brought it here, how do you say, for the hell of it. And, of course, we don't want them to get it back."

That evening we went back to our compound, talked for a while with Savimbi (of whom more shortly), read for an hour — Jamba has electricity — and went to sleep.

The next morning, as every morning, the bugle blew at oh-dark-thirty. The next two hours were enough to make an old Marine a bit sentimental. Against the dead silence of the bush came the chant of companies on their morning runs, a rhythmic rising and falling in the night, nearing and receding, coming from three directions as the

formations came together and went their separate ways. It could almost have been Parris Island. The thudding cadence was the pure music of the military. My Ovambundu is non-existent, but I could almost translate: "If I die on the Russian front, bury me with a Russian..." well, never mind. SOF may be a family magazine by now. The sun rose red and lovely over the bush and still the voices came.

The next day we went to watch the regulars training. Savimbi says that UNITA has 35,000 men under arms, of whom 14,000 are regulars. It isn't clear how many men train for the regulars at one time. The officers

said that training definitely definitely took three months,

hesitated as to how many were in boot at Jamba, and pleaded security as a reason for not saying. I quoted Venable's Rule for Friendly Armies — "Never tell any journalist anything you don't want to see in print" — and we left it at that. Besides, Third World armies are notorious for inflating their troop counts — which doesn't mean Savimbi necessarily does.

Training seemed good, solid, ordinary training for a decent professional army. The recruits formed large circles and ran for conditioning while a drill instructor in the center called cadence. Then they did calisthenics as all armies do, carried

UNITA regular drilling in a base camp. Soldier is armed with a standard AK-47.



ABOVE: Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, walks through group of followers during a tour of a camp. **BELOW:** UNITA soldiers set up 57mm rocket pod taken off a shot-down helicopter for supporters to view. Soviets mount UV-16-57 rocket pod, which can launch anti-tank, HE, fragmentation or metallic chaff (to foul sensors on electronic systems) rounds, on Mi-8 Hip or Mi-24 Hind helicopters.



each other around for endurance, and so on.

Weapons classes were held in Portuguese (there are so many tribal languages that most troops can't understand any particular one). We watched instruction on the PKM and AK-47. The instructors wrote the day's lesson on a chalkboard under the trees, demonstrated, and made the students practice the lesson. Like all good weapons-instructors, they could obviously disassemble an AK in a barrel of molasses in 11 seconds, using their toes.

The students looked intelligent and attentive, which is more than you can say for American troops in recent years. They can definitely strip an AK. The DIs are a good bit gentler than ours. The reason is probably that the troops are already cooperative and genuinely trying to learn, so they don't need to be harassed.

Later in the week, I met with Savimbi at his headquarters and we talked for several hours. For complicated reasons I'd rather not go into, I'm not going to quote him directly. I did tape the conversation, however, and the following analysis of the war is taken from the tape.

Savimbi himself is an interesting man. About

47 years old, he holds a PhD in law and politics from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. He is a big, ruggedly handsome, impressive man with a slight paunch. Shaking hands with him is like getting your hand caught in a door. He is smart. I have heard him answering questions from reporters fluently in French, Portuguese and English, and he speaks several tribal languages too. His English is rapid and heavily accented but easily

intelligible, and has the complicated sentence-structure that one expects from an intellectual — which he is. He also has the habit — unusual in politicians — of actually answering questions, directly and in detail. A soldier-philosopher, if you will.

First we talked about the general military situation. UNITA firmly controls the southeastern part of Angola, especially Cuando-Cubango Province. Savimbi estimates that he controls roughly a third of the country, Luanda controls a third (in the north) and a third is disputed. About 40,000 Cubans are in Angola (U.S. sources say 20,000 but don't necessarily know more than Savimbi does), as well as 1-2,000 Russians. Savimbi stresses that this number is an estimate, as information is hard to come by. The Russians fly transports and serve on the general staff.

The Cubans until recently served as advisers, but now are doing more and more of the actual fighting; the reason is that the black army of Luanda doesn't much want to fight (ARVNs, anyone?). They have somewhere between 50 and 100 MiGs, mostly MiG-21s, and a fair number of helicopters, mostly Mi-8s.

Savimbi's analysis of the effectiveness of air power against his forces is not likely to make American pilots from 'Nam very happy. He says the MiGs are no problem because UNITA's tactics do not give the planes a target. The army is mostly guerrillas. If the men bunched up for conventional war, the MiGs would be devastating.

Continued on page 75

UNITA regulars stand at their version of "Parade Rest" in front of huge Savimbi posters and UNITA flag during ceremony celebrating departure of Portuguese from Angola on 11 November 1977.





INTRIGUE IN AFRICA

Special Forces Jinxed by Palace Politics and Juju in Liberia

by Charles W. Sasser

INTRIGUE. Sometimes it was so thick, you could smell it. The hot nations of emerging Africa are notorious for it, and U.S. Green Berets found themselves dropped into the middle of it when Africa's newest strong man, former Army Master Sgt. Samuel Kanyon Doe of Liberia, requested the U.S. State Department send him Special Forces to train a 300-man Immediate Reaction Force.

Doe was an unknown quantity. A month before, on 12 April 1980, he and a handful of other NCOs got drunk in their quarters at Barclay Training Center and stormed the executive mansion in Monrovia, the capital, where they assassinated President William R. Tolbert and 27 other officials. When they sobered up, they found themselves heading a nation on the brink of bankruptcy and boiling with revolutionary rhetoric. Native tribesmen were rebelling against President Tolbert's economic policies and against the so-called "settlers,"

SF VETERAN

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Sasser worked for 14 years as a police officer with the Miami, Fla., and Tulsa, Okla. departments, both as a uniformed officer and a plain-clothes detective.

He has also found time to be a golden gloves boxer, professional rodeo bronc rider, fur trapper, airplane pilot, high school teacher and farmer.

He's now a free-lance writer living in the mountains near Tenkiller Lake in northeastern Oklahoma.

Demolitions training. All photos courtesy Charles W. Sasser.

descendants of freed American slaves, who had settled the western Guinea Coast in 1822 and dominated the society ever since, although they composed only three percent of the population. Doe was a member of the tiny Krahn tribe — not a "settler" — and he was now president. The coup had made him the Man of the Hour.

For all that, the new president was an unknown in Washington, but he was obviously preferable to candidates from communist-backed political groups like the Movement for Justice in Africa and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia. The Pentagon, in particular, must have set great store by Doe; three months after his request, on 2 September 1980, a six-man advance party of Green Berets stepped off a Pan Am jet in Monrovia. Detachment Commander Capt. Clark Sorenson, medic

When the shit hit the fan, the Green Beret behind enemy lines knew that he could depend on only three things: himself, his kind and God.

SFC Dean Read, engineer Sgt. Greg Vares, heavy weapons Sgt. Bob Holmes, radioman Austin Bennett and light weapons Sgt. Kevin Carl shouldered their bags and headed for the terminal. The other six men of the 12-man operational detachment (ODA-712, Co. A, 1st Bn., 7th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, N.C.) would arrive in-country as soon as the detachment commander inspected the troops and their training site and pronounced them ready to begin training.

The intrigue began before they even set foot in Liberia. Shortly before boarding an Africa-bound flight in the States, the advance party had been informed that Doe's People's Redemption Council (the acronym PRC soon became "Prick") had ordered the Green Berets to enter Liberia unarmed and without capability of direct communication with the outside world.

"They don't trust you," the team was advised. "They're afraid you'll make CW contact and bring other people in."

No government representative met the khaki-clad advance party in Monrovia. The Green Berets' mission, marked **secret** in the beginning, must have been so sensitive, observed one American soldier, that Washington hadn't bothered to notify Liberia when they were arriving. Finally, a taciturn colonel from the American military mission appeared and drove them the 30 miles from airport to city.

Like most "cities" in underdeveloped Africa, Liberia's capital is made up primarily of mud and tin huts that line narrow streets, pot-holed by collapsing sewers and water mains, and littered with garbage and street vendors selling half-rotted fish. Abundant evidence testified to the coup and its revolutionary aftermath. A red-and-white banner draped on a building read: **OUR EYES ARE OPEN: THE TIME OF THE PEOPLE HAS COME.** In the lobby of the El Mason hotel, where the advance party was dumped following a quick in-processing at the embassy by a low-ranking bureaucrat, was a sign admonishing guests to obey the dusk-to-dawn curfew. It warned: **STAY OFF THE STREETS AND STAY ALIVE.**

"You'll have a helluva tough time training troops in Liberia," the American colonel warned before he left them. "If they aren't making *juju* on each other, they're running off to the 'Palava Hut' to bullshit. They don't make good troops."

"*Juju?*"

"Magic."

It wasn't by magic, though, that the European in the gray suit appeared in the El

Mason's lobby to watch the uniformed Americans check in. He tried to look nonchalant, leaning against a support and reading a newspaper. But he was about as inconspicuous in black Africa as a goose among turkeys. From then on, wherever the Americans went, they knew their shadow couldn't be far behind. The SF men finally decided that their tail must be for intimidation, since the Russians probably knew every move the Green Berets made through a highly placed source on President Doe's own governing council.

According to Fort Bragg, Doe had promised to have everything ready to go the day Special Forces arrived. To Capt. Sorenson's dismay, however, he found not only had nothing been done toward that purpose, but also the first officials to whom he spoke at army headquarters at Barclay Training Center apparently knew nothing about American soldiers arriving in-country.

"Who did you say you were?" an officer asked suspiciously in tribal-accented English. English is the official language of Liberia, but for most it is a second language. "Americans? Why?"

Sorenson explained patiently, then asked to speak to President Doe.

"That is impossible," said the officer.

"Why is it impossible?"

"The chairman is busy with matters of state."

"*This is a matter of state.*"

"No. No. We will find out who you are."

After an incredible battle with govern-

ment red tape, Sorenson finally managed to contact an Army officer who referred to himself simply as Capt. Waters. Waters acknowledged that Gen. Kewampa himself, General of the Army, had named him as commander of the new strike force battalion. However, he admitted sheepishly, his entire force presently consisted of 80 men, not 300. These, he said, were all that remained of slain President Tolbert's own strike force.

"We are fortunate to have so many," Waters said, then explained how this good fortune had occurred.

Following Doe's April coup, Capt. Waters and others of the dead president's elite strike force had been rounded up and held prisoner at a Monrovia golf course. Some of the officers simply "disappeared" following bouts with PRC interrogators. Waters suspected they had been executed. He and the others managed to escape the same fate by swearing undying loyalty to President Doe and the PRC, after which they were released to return to Barclay. Gen. Kewampa himself had vouched for Waters. It was Kewampa's patronage which led to Waters being named commander of the new strike force-to-be, a battalion with only 80 men — most of them officers.

"I am a soldier," Waters emphasized. "I know little of politics, and I wish to know little."

Billboards like this one flourished in Liberia following first revolution in country's history. Samuel K. Doe's picture is first on left.





Liberian crews fire .50-caliber machine guns.

"But surely you know why President Doe hasn't kept his commitment, as we have kept ours?" he was pressed.

"I am a soldier," Waters evaded stubbornly.

"Okay. How about the rest of our men?"

"I am told that the commandos may select from the best volunteers. We will select together."

"And a training site?"

"That, too, is at your discretion."

A decade of struggle in the Vietnam jungles with meager success had given the Special Forces and counterinsurgency in general a bad name, and by the late 1970s, the Army's ability to conduct guerrilla warfare nearly disappeared. However, with the increase in insurgency and terrorism in Asia, Africa and Latin America, U.S. Special Forces were being rebuilt with an emphasis on training foreign armies to cope with insurgents.

The MTT (Mobile Training Team) assigned to Liberia was one of the first assigned out-of-country since the Vietnam War's end. Much depended on its success. Aware of this, the advance party swallowed its disappointment in Doe's lack of preparations and began making its own.

Liberia's political climate remained stormy. The Green Berets couldn't even be sure of Samuel Doe's political leanings, much less those of the other 15 members of his PRC.

"The president is very much pro-American, although he was against the settlers," Capt. Waters explained. "However, I am told there are those in government who do not wish you to succeed in training our commandos and who will attempt to prevent it."

"Who are they?" he was asked.

"I am only a soldier," he retreated.

"Why would they want to prevent it?"

"They are afraid," he replied simply, as though the reasons were obvious. Later, when he trusted the Americans, he elaborated by describing how various members of government, were still jockeying for position, each fearing the others might accumulate enough power to make him supreme dictator. A 300-man commando battalion could virtually assure someone a kingship.

The Green Berets soon learned also that an aide to the General of the Army, known to them only as Col. Borteh, had acquired the reputation of communist sympathizer, as had Vice-President Thomas Weh Syen. So far, neither had openly opposed the efforts of Doe and Kewampa to solidify relations with the United States, although they had reportedly been seen entering and leaving the Russian embassy. As for Capt. Waters, Sorenson thought he could be trusted as long as Doe remained in power. The moment Doe's control relaxed, however, the opportunistic Waters would shift his position to follow newer prevailing winds, as he had already shifted once before to follow Doe. Capt. Amos Kartouha, Waters' battalion exec, was about as readable as an Arabic road map. The Green Berets thought it best not to place too much confidence in him.

Such were the threads of intrigue interwoven into the new government. Occasional spurts of violence erupted, as "accidents" claimed first one, then another who might have proven too ambitious. Knowing that such a government could easily turn upon even its invited guests, the Green Berets devised themselves a secret emergency "boogie plan" while they looked over potential training sites and tried to set up machinery necessary to process commando volunteers.

If things happened to go sour for one reason or another, they wanted to be able to acquire weapons and get a head start for the border. To hell with trying to depend on the American ambassador, who made his

opinions about Special Forces quite clear, or even on the U.S. government. After all, President Jimmy Carter was about to prove his mettle in Iran. When the shit hit the fan, the Green Beret behind enemy lines knew that he could depend on only three things: himself, his kind and God.

Sorenson and Waters selected, for a training site a seaside estate that once belonged to a pair of Lebanese brothers. One of them had fled to France after the coup. The other was in prison, accused of sympathizing with the previous regime. The estate consisted of two sprawling red-roofed stucco mansions and outbuildings on 20 acres of land, with unclaimed jungle nearby for maneuvers. The mansions, although they had been looted and vandalized until nothing of value remained, were still perfect for billeting and training troops in relative isolation.

The PRC readily approved the training site, as Waters suggested it would. However, days of red tape followed before workers and heavy equipment arrived to begin construction of what was to be known as the Sugar Beach Training Area. The impatient Americans thought the delay had more to do with political manipulation than with shortages of men or materials. Someone, it appeared, was trying every way possible to prevent training from beginning.

Capt. Waters agreed with that suspicion. "I believe sometimes we will never see a commando battalion," he said.

Once it began, work progressed so swiftly that the Americans' apprehensions about the project were lulled. The jungle

Liberian 4.2 mortar crew in action during commando training at Sugar Beach.



On their part, the Green Berets considered the embassy a perfect example of "Ugly Americanism."

was pushed back to make room for small-arms ranges, an automatic-weapons FAM (familiarization) course, a "Quick Kill" range with pop-up man-sized targets, zero ranges, rappelling towers and training areas. The mansions were converted into barracks and offices. September drifted into October and it was nearly November before the site could be occupied.

Meanwhile, it became more and more apparent that the U.S. ambassador wanted nothing to do with Special Forces and any hush-hush missions they might be on. He never seemed to miss an opportunity to shun or insult the Green Berets, even going so far as to ban them from the embassy swimming pool. For all practical purposes, the men from the 7th were on their own.

On their part, the Green Berets considered the embassy a perfect example of "Ugly Americanism." Embassy people lived like royalty in their compound, guarded, pampered and spoiled by domestic servants and drivers. For a colonel in the military mission, the air-conditioning bill alone was \$1,500 a month, nearly double the yearly income of the average Liberian. The embassy was so isolated from regular life in the capital that the Green Berets were scoffed at when they tried to report spy activity by virtually every Iron-Curtain nation in the eastern hemisphere.



Sugar Beach Training headquarters outside Monrovia belonged to wealthy Lebanese brothers. One fled and one was imprisoned following Doe's 1980 coup.

Capt. Waters often pointed out known agents from Russia, East Germany and other satellite nations. The guerrilla soldiers had the feeling that the man in the gray suit or one of his counterparts was always skulking around after them. Sleek black cars cruised by to photograph the progress at Sugar Beach; the same cars sometimes pulled into Monrovia traffic to follow the Green Berets. Capt. Waters never went anywhere with the Americans unless armed.

One afternoon, a regular Army sedan filled with soldiers stopped Waters and three SF sergeants in downtown Monrovia. The soldiers appeared on edge; their shooting fingers never left the triggers of their M16s as they hopped about waving their arms and shouting orders.

"What is the cause of all this?" Waters demanded, but he was hushed by a sharp jab to the ribs. It was obvious the soldiers were acting on orders.

The prisoners were escorted under guard to Col. Borteh's office at Barclay. Sgts. Vares, Read and Holmes stood silently and waited for something to happen. Read nudged the others and nodded at a huge mural covering one wall. It depicted Fidel Castro working in a sugar-cane field. Several guards had Soviet-made AK rifles.

Thomas Weh Syen himself arrived to conduct the interrogation.

"Who are you?" he shouted. "I didn't even know you were here!" Sgt. Read patiently explained, although he knew the vice-president had to have already known.

"How come your country doesn't help us?" Weh Syen raged. "We belonged to you! We look to you for our country's ancestry; but you sit back on your fat be-

hinds and let us starve!"

Tension continued to build in the room while Weh Syen's tantrum rose to a venomous crescendo. Some of the guards appeared nervous. The Americans could see themselves causing an international incident by being thrown into the political dungeons about which they had heard so much. Even worse, this spittle-spewing fanatic might have them trussed to telephone poles and executed as he and Doe had done to so many others since the coup.

To a man, the Green Berets began glancing around the office and estimating chances of overpowering their guards and engineering an escape if the situation led to that. Capt. Waters later assured them their fears were not totally ungrounded; Weh Syen, he said, would not hesitate to have them and the commando officers shot if he thought he could get away with it.

Perhaps the fact that Weh Syen was not in Doe's good graces at the moment prevented him from going any further in his "interrogation." The Green Berets had heard about the falling-out between the two through the ever-present grapevine.

In July, Weh Syen went on one of his infamous rampages and demolished a century-old monument to the country's founders in eastern Liberia, after which he fired hundreds of government employees. Doe personally toured the eastern provinces afterward, assuring the tribes that he would severely punish any other wayward council member.

Doe bluntly warned his PRC: "Hey, if you get caught, you might not live to tell about it." The Green Berets could think of no one better than Weh Syen whom they would like to see receive such punishment. They were to get their wish sooner than expected.

The vice-president's tirade ended and he released the Americans after one of his more level-headed officers pointed out, "They don't know about their government. They're just soldiers."



Waters looked grim on the way back to Sugar Beach. Later, in private, the SF detachment discussed these latest developments and assessed the obvious evidence that both Col. Borteh and Weh Syen might be attempting to break with Doe and divert the revolution toward the left. In light of all this, the secret "boogie plan" to get out of Liberia in an emergency was of great comfort to the tiny band from Fort Bragg.

"Look, we were sent here to do a job," the detachment decided, "and by God we're going to do it! We're not going to be scared off by underlings."

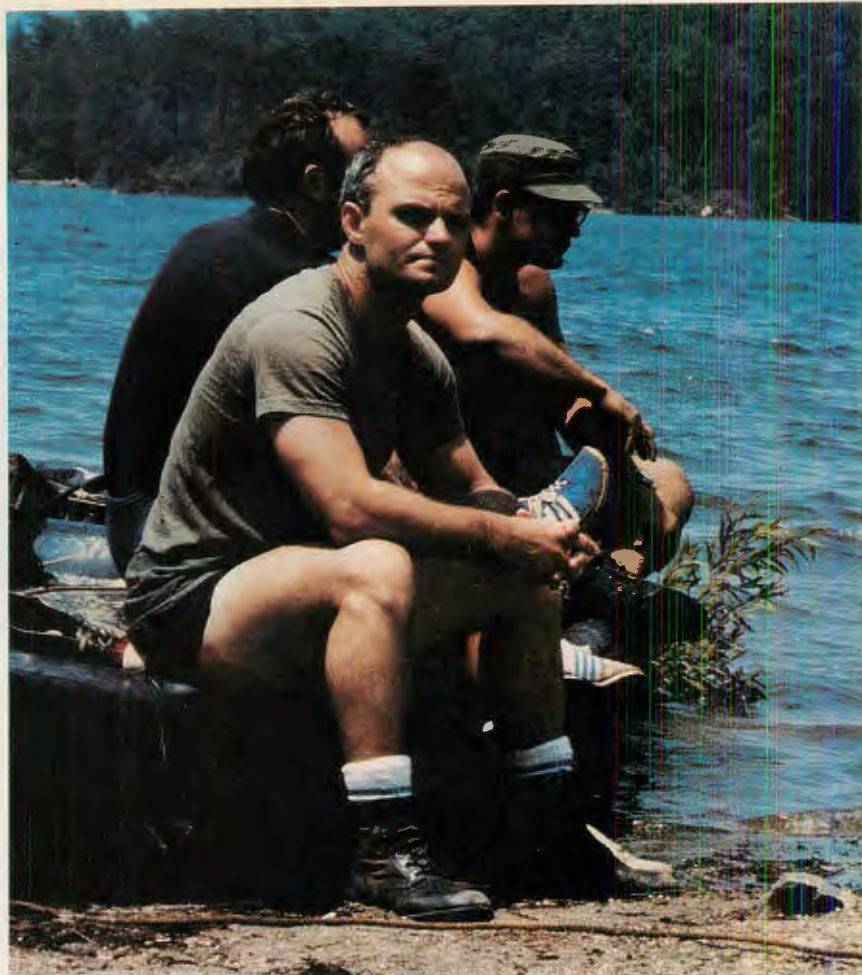
Selection of commando volunteers began even before construction at Sugar Beach reached completion. They came bare-foot and shirtless, civilians as well as enlisted men from Barclay. It was a ragtag mob that the country's economic problems drove to Sugar Beach.

Illiterate and largely untrained, superstitious tribesmen lined up for a chance to earn that attractive \$136 a month as a commando. Some of the volunteers were 14 or 15 year-olds and claimed to be 20; others were 50 and said they were 30. Since most had no papers of any kind, the selection committee chose applicants on physical conditioning, previous military records, if any, the applicant's own statements and Capt. Waters' recommendations. No one harbored any illusions about how difficult it was going to be to turn such raw material into any kind of a military weapon.

The oldest man accepted for training had to be well over 50, although he insisted he was younger. Small, shiny black and as wizened as an ancient olive tree, "Commando Kibbie," as he became known, showed up one morning, mumbling to himself and looking for all the world like Droopy from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. He snapped smartly to attention and saluted with his hand half-closed into a fist; he would hold that position no matter how long it took for his salute to be returned. Kibbie soon became Special Forces' favorite trooper, particularly since he applied native ingenuity to modern technology and constructed wonderful knives from old car leaf springs and mahogany.

It wasn't long before a slum of corrugated tin lean-tos and mud-brick huts sprouted up outside the Sugar Beach compound to house the new commandos' families. As for the commandos themselves, they were a rough, undisciplined mob to begin with who would just as soon sleep in with their wives as show up for training. Even at the Barclay Center, basic trainees commonly retired to specially built "Palava Huts" to discuss at length any order given them before deciding to obey, reject or ignore it.

A number of the commandos had been soldiers present in the firing squads that April afternoon at Barclay when the troops gathered to shoot the 13 members of the previous government who had been sentenced to die by Doe's military tribunal. It had been like a festival. Soldiers postured for the thousands of excited civilians



gathered to view the spectacle, while workmen mounted nine telephone poles within view of the condemned men.

Soldiers dragged out the first nine victims and trussed them to the poles. It took 20 minutes after that for the firing squad to get lined out. When the execution finally began, it sounded like a fire fight. Volley after volley was discharged at the condemned men, lasting nearly three minutes, before the victims began slumping in their bindings. Cecil Dennis, one of Africa's most respected diplomats, stood unscathed through it all with his eyes closed. Finally, a Liberian officer stepped forward and killed him with a burst of automatic fire.

It took five minutes to kill the other four. Many soldiers not in the firing squad joined in. When the victims were at last dead and the firing stopped, a guttural shout echoed from thousands of throats: "Freedom! At last we have our freedom!" Some of the soldiers broke ranks and began kicking and pummeling the corpses, proving they were at least bloodthirsty, if not efficient.

Spies were managing to infiltrate the volunteers' ranks at Sugar Beach. One afternoon, an American Green Beret passing by a group of men already selected for training heard Spanish being spoken. Almost no one speaks Spanish in Africa — unless he's one of Castro's Cubans. The Spanish ceased abruptly when the American approached. None of the group would

admit to speaking it.

Three members of ODA-712, 7th Special Forces, training prior to arrival in Liberia. Foreground is Staff Sgt. Kevin Carl, light-weapon specialist. Center is Sgt. 1st Class Dean Read, medic. Soldier in patrol cap is Staff Sgt. John Qubeck, commo man.

admit to speaking it.

"If we hear Spanish again in training," a Liberian officer warned, "its speaker will die on the spot."

The Africans finally began to realize that at Sugar Beach, if nowhere else in the Army, training was in dead earnest. Discipline would be strictly enforced. There would be no Palava Huts here. The 300 men of the newly assembled battalion even managed to fall in with some semblance of structure to greet the second half of the U.S. Special Forces detachment when it arrived in November. Commando Kibbie was in the front rank, saluting with his half-closed fist.

The second half of the team — Executive Officer First Lt. Mark Meoni, Team Sgt. 1st Class Dave Ramsey, Intel Sergeant SSG Larry Plesser, Engineer Sgt. Don Prether, Medic Staff Sgt. Bryan Stackhouse, and Commo-man Staff Sgt. John Qubeck — gasped in astonishment at their first glimpse of the mass assembled on the grounds in front of the two mansions at Sugar Beach. The men were ragged, bare-foot and stained with red African dust.

“Oh, damn,” someone breathed. They look more like cannibals than commandos.”

“Oh, damn!” someone breathed. “They look more like cannibals than commandos.”

From almost the beginning, the commando battalion was plagued with what could only be logistical sabotage. A shipment of French combat boots proved much too small for native feet, although the tribesmen still insisted on cramming their size-11 feet into size-9 boots in order to more nearly resemble the Green Berets. Korean fatigues arrived in shoddy condition, all of a single size. Someone deliberately fouled up commando records so no one received pay for two months running, causing some desertions. Every time Capt. Sorenson went to Col. Borteh to complain, the aide apologized profusely and innocently and then, the Green Berets suspected, went about devising new ways to harass and frustrate the fledgling battalion.

Sorenson was successfully thwarted every time he tried to go over Weh Syen and Borteh to President Doe. Sabotage of materiel and supplies became an inconvenience the Green Berets learned to live with. Even paper staples took a month to arrive through channels.

“Fort Bragg was telling us to get on with the training,” a team member lamented angrily, “while no one in Liberia except the commandos themselves really seemed to give a damn one way or another. In fact, somebody, and we knew who it was, was trying his best to prevent training at Sugar Beach in every way possible short of actual violence.”

Even violence couldn't be ruled out after the day a soldier, washed out of training, sneaked onto the compound apparently intent on assassinating Capt. Waters and creating an incident Doe's enemies in the PRC could use to disband the strike force.

Sgts. Read and Carl came upon the assassin-to-be in the arms room as he attempted to steal an M16. There was a wild look in the reject's eyes when he spotted the Green Berets and he desperately tried to slip a magazine home before the pair could bear down on him.

Too late. Carl was a short man, but all muscle. With one leap he pinned the gunman to the floor while Read wrestled the rifle away. Later rumors hinted that someone from the “Pricks” had recruited him in a continuing effort to destroy the battalion.

Rumors also circulated that Doe himself was in danger of being deposed. These indicated American Special Forces names had been added to a list of “traitors” to be tied to telephone poles at Barclay and ex-



ecuted. Some of the Green Berets violated rules and began arming themselves and sleeping with weapons nearby. The situation was rapidly becoming a Special Forces nightmare, complete with recalcitrant tribesmen, jealous leaders and enough conspiracies to last an ordinary PLO terrorist a lifetime.

As if the intrigue weren't enough to discourage them, Special Forces men found that most of the commando volunteers lacked even a basic understanding of weaponry and modern warfare. In Commando Kibbie's own lifetime, the Africans had conducted war with primitive spears and blowguns. Kibbie could even recall old men who claimed to have tasted human flesh. Of course, these were from tribes of the interior, but still the past and the present often clashed in Africa — as they were now at Sugar Beach.

“Hell, we'd have to teach them the most simple procedures over and over again,” one SF man complained, “and then they'd still forget something as elementary as how

Commandos rappelling. One soldier had to be restrained from jumping from tower to demonstrate his *juju*.

to feed an M60. It was frustrating. But, damnit, they were so friendly and eager to learn you couldn't stay mad at them.”

One of the major obstacles in training the Liberians was overcoming their traditional tribal superstitions. What could one expect from an ordinary illiterate tribesman when a “Prick,” who had been with Doe the night of the coup, wore an amulet bag around his neck containing the slain president's left eye and testicles. This kind of power, or *juju* as it was called, transcended all social boundaries. Most of the soldiers wore amulets around their knees or carried little feathered riding crops which were supposed to protect their owners from harm. The commandos were thoroughly convinced the Americans could not shoot them because of their powerful *juju*.

“I thought of shooting one of the bastards just to show them it wasn't true,”

admitted one frustrated SF soldier.

One morning a trainee climbed a 60-foot rappelling tower and was going to jump off to prove his *juju*. Some of the Green Beret NCOs were willing to let him jump and put an end to the nonsense once and for all, but the officers tactfully persuaded him to display his *juju* less decisively.

The troops were found to be terrified of the sea. According to them, it was inhabited by spirit beings called *Neegees* who grabbed their victims by the ankles and dragged them away. The Green Beret DIs ran their six platoons up and down the beach during PT. But the Africans steadfastly refused to wade in the surf. Formations quickly disintegrated as the fearful commandos scampered up and down ahead of the breaking waves like sand crabs.

Still, even the most skeptical American had second thoughts about the native *juju* beliefs when an African fell off a deuce-and-a-half and broke his left femur. A family witch doctor called a *zo* showed up at the hospital before the soldier could be x-rayed and treated. The *zo* smeared herbs mixed with mud on the affected thigh and bound it with a bamboo corset. Then he broke a chicken's left leg and announced, "When the chicken walks, he walks."

"With a broken femur, he'll either die of infection or never walk again," the SF medics decided.

Eight weeks later, the Americans gaped in open-mouthed astonishment when the injured soldier came walking through the compound gates to report back for duty.

In spite of logistic and pay problems and the ever-present rumors, morale remained high at Sugar Beach. The commandos seemed to know they were the first of a new breed on the continent: highly trained and efficient *special* troops. When an instructor barked, "Seats!" at the beginning of a class, the students returned a resounding "Freedom! Fifty-five grains at a time!" (The M16 fires a 55-grain round.)

The strike force was shaping up. The Americans were training six days a week and throwing as much physical and mental stress at the Africans as they could endure. The days and many of the nights were filled with patrolling and land navigation, raids and ambushes, live firing, counterinsurgency operations and psyops. Demo-men Prether and Vares taught conventional explosives, as well as field expedient techniques using fertilizer and claymore mines made from tin cans and gravel. Some of the troops became platoon medics, using scientific methods over the tried-and-true African formula of "When the chicken walks, he walks." Most of the soldiers even began taking to the surf, although they kept their eyes peeled for lurking *Neegees*.

But human nature is not easily changed. Special Forces was discovering that it is not in the African's nature to become the rigidly disciplined, cold killer a good commando might someday have to be if he found himself pitted against Soviet-trained



Liberian commandos mug for camera. Commando Kibbie is third from left in center row.

neighbors in a life-or-death struggle. The African could be cruel, to be sure — as he had been in the April executions — but it was in the careless way that a child is cruel. He liked to fight noisily and with passion and then stop to celebrate. When laid in on an ambush site, he could maintain noise and light discipline for perhaps 15 minutes before he wanted to be up, smoking and joking with his comrades. The discipline of war was something entirely different for him than for a German or Russian or even an American.

One afternoon during a break in the Quick Kill course, the Liberians were having one of their usual noisy group *palavas* when a rifle shot rang out and a commando's bush hat went spinning off into the

dust. Sgt. Kevin Carl yanked the M16 from the offender's hand.

"You could have killed this man with your carelessness," the weapons expert shouted, then continued to rake the transgressor across the coals while the other commandos watched. By the time Carl finished, even the ashen-faced victim was grinning. He had his amulet clutched firmly in his fist.

"Sergeant! Sergeant!" the others cried. "He was not in danger. His *juju* saved him."

"Hell, they'll kill each other before they ever see a battlefield," the SF men predicted gloomily.

But the news leaking out of Sugar Beach was not of shortcomings but of fantastic successes instead.

"I think we worked miracles with the unit," the Green Berets conceded. "The Liberians were no different than any other black Africans. Whatever their faults, the

The Americans posed for the cameras while flipping the photographer their middle finger.



commandos would still be able to fight circles around anybody else on the continent. We're sure of that!"

Apparently, so were a lot of other people, some of them not so friendly. As graduation day neared for Africa's first U.S. Special Forces-trained counterinsurgency battalion, spies seemed to step up their attempts to find out exactly what was going on out at Sugar Beach.

A man appeared there one morning, asking questions and claiming to represent a nonexistent American engineering company. Two tourists approached Carl and Qubeck in Monrovia and sought to establish their credentials by saying they were from Connecticut. Only, they pronounced it "Connecticot," — the way Europeans would. Phantom-like figures tailed anyone leaving the compound. The SF team was having dinner at a patio restaurant on Cooper's Beach one afternoon when a black sedan from the Soviet em-

bassy stopped in the street and two Russians jumped out and began taking pictures. The Americans posed for the cameras while flipping the photographer their middle digits.

Enemies among the "Pricks" weren't yet ready to concede defeat in establishment of a commando battalion for President Doe. There were rumors of commandos' families being threatened, of subtle coercion being leveled against certain soldiers to get them to quit, and even of terrorism if the strike force ever became an actuality. The original 300 men had already been whittled down to 136. Certainly not all of those who washed out did so as the result of training attrition.

Then, a week before graduation in February, word came down from higher command that the strike force was to be disbanded because its loyalty to the president had become suspect. It didn't take an overly perceptive mind to know who had cast suspicion on the battalion. A black cloud hung over the compound during the final week of training. Some of the troops, especially the Liberian officers, were infuriated and played into Weh Syen's hands by openly advocating among themselves another *coup d'etat* against the PRC. Some of the commandos actually expected to be attacked by conventional forces from Barclay and speculated on how long they could hold out against the entire army. Even the Green Berets nervously reviewed their secret "boogie plan."

Graduation ceremonies were originally scheduled to commence with a demonstration live-firing exercise with 106mm and .50-cals, followed by demolition displays, rappelling and patrols including raids and ambush exercises. President Doe himself was expected to attend and present his elite troops their well-earned red-and-black Commando tabs. However, the day before graduation, a string of jeeps manned by heavily armed conventional forces came pouring through the gates at Sugar Beach and began confiscating every weapon heavier than an M60 machine gun.

"There will be no live-firing tomorrow," the Barclay troops explained curtly, even going so far as to confiscate M16 ammo.

Capt. Sorenson tried to go directly to Doe — with the same failure as before. Weh Syen and Borteh had passed the word around that the battalion was about to become the shortest-lived commando unit in the world. There could be little doubt that the commandos would be disbanded immediately if Weh Syen and Borteh had

their way about it. Apparently, even the abbreviated graduation ceremonies would have been cancelled if it hadn't been such a direct insult to the United States.

"The shit's going to hit the fan," a Green Beret suggested during the team meeting that night. "I think we'd best give them their little dog-and-pony show tomorrow and get the hell out of Dodge before we end up in the middle. We've trained their strike force for them. What they do with it is their business."

"But it's like we're deserting them," another interjected. "With those commandos, someone could take this country over and run it the way he wanted."

"That's what our Prick friends are afraid of," someone else pointed out.

It irked Special Forces that all their labors for the past six months were about to end like this because of two leftists in the government and a leader not strong enough to trust his own leadership. Yet they also realized that they were helpless to do anything about it. Training indigenous troops for Third World countries has its drawbacks, among them the inevitable intrigues. ODA-712 had no choice but to concede a limited defeat. It looked like another African nation would be lost to the Free World.

Thomas Weh Syen's self-satisfied smirk represented President Doe at graduation ceremonies. He and Col. Borteh showed up with some of their bodyguards armed with AKs. Immediately following graduation, Borteh confiscated all weapons remaining at Sugar Beach.

ODA-712 from the 7th Special Forces Group left Liberia on Friday. On Monday, the new strike force was disbanded and its troops ordered back to regular units. Two months later, intrigue at the palace took on a far deadlier character when five ex-commandos were killed in a coup attempt. Col. Borteh and Thomas Weh Syen died leading that attempt.

Back in the United States, Green Berets from the Liberian training detachment hopefully speculated that the two conspirators might have met their ends tied to telephone poles rather than in battle.

Later that same year, Capt. Amos Kartouha, the strike-force exec, died in a mysterious automobile accident and several other officers subsequently disappeared or had similar accidents. Thus it was that Africa's only Green Beret-trained commando battalion, born in controversy and intrigue, died before it ever had a chance to be tested. ✕



THE WAR ON OUR DOORSTEP

**SOF's Front-Line Report
from Central America**

Text & Photos by John Metzger



MANANA country.

That's everything south of Laredo. You know the routine. "No problemm, Seniorr, Manana weel doo."

Soldier of Fortune's team — Publisher Robert K. Brown, Art Director Craig Nunn, Director of Special Projects Alex McColl, Demolitions Editor John Donovan, translator Ralph Edens, Paramedic Operations Editor Dr. John Peters and I arrived in Guatemala City on a Guatemala-El Salvador FAM (familiarization) trip at 2300 11 February 1983.

The program was SOF's fairly standard "Hearts and Minds" routine. First we jump out the door with the local airborne, score the right points with the troops and colonels, then head for the bush.

The jump was scheduled for 12 February but upon arrival at the Sheraton Conquistador we were met by Guatemalan Civil Air Patrol pilots who shared a drink and then said, "Today is impossible, no planes. Maybe manana."

No jump, then who needs a full night of sleep. From 0100 to 0400 we tried the nightlife of Guat City, learning quickly how to say "Otra Cervesa, por favor."

Eight hours later, at noon, we stood at attention at Gen. Felipe Cruz Airborne Base in San Jose on Guatemala's Pacific Coast while Col. Alfredo Garcia, the base commander, drove in Guatemalan "Blood Wings." In between there was an unexpected 0500 wake-up call, an 0600 flight from Guat City to San Jose, an unexpected trip through the jump school under the tutelage of jumpmaster Maj. Francisco Najera and three jumps.

At 0730, while waiting for a Guatemalan Air Force "Arava" — an Israeli-made cargo plane armed with twin .50s that resembles a chopped C-119 — Najera not only showed us the airborne training base, he put us through it.

We were quite a curiosity to the recruits and their black-hat instructors as our black-fatigue-clad team of airborne journalists did PLFs and drilled on jump commands and exit procedure. Being the least experienced jumper, it was decided that I would try it once from the 34-foot tower. John Donovan trudged up those stairs with me and happily told me to stand in the door and "Go!" Everyone gleefully watched me slide the length of

the cable and crash into the berm at the end.

When the Arava arrived we suited up in non-steerable T-10s. Making one pass over black sand beaches, we were out the door at 1,200 feet. The DZ was a good one, but unfortunately, Doc Peters came in hard on the first jump, and injured his back. He would not be jumping for a while, and returned to the States early as a result of his injury.

After a hurried series of jumps, the Arava was called off on another mission and Garcia gleefully slammed onto our chests Guatemalan wings and Najera led us in the Guatemalan airborne toast, from mugs containing our wings and VAT-69. "Ustedes son Paracaidistas de Guatemala" — "You are now Guatemalan paratroopers." That very large shot of whiskey just about did us all in.

Sometimes in Manana country, *manana* means *manana*.

We found the Guatemalan airborne troops to be motivated, proficient and well-equipped. The training resembles American training, and the black-hats

SOFer John Donovan stands in door of Guatemalan airborne practice plane prior to jump at Gen. Felipe Cruz base.



SOF staff ready to go in Israeli-made Arava. Left to right: Craig Nunn, Robert K. Brown, Ralph Edens, Guatemalan Civil Air Patrol pilot, Col. Garcia (airborne base commander, seated on floor), Alex McColl and John Donovan. Parachutes are non-steerable T-10s.



are disciplined professionals. "I have U.S., Canadian, South African and now Guatemalan wings," said master jumper Donovan. "And the Guatemalan training and operation is one of the most professional that I have ever seen or experienced." Donovan concluded the ceremonies by presenting his U.S. master wings (which he had received at Ft. Benning in 1969) to our host, Col. Garcia.

The next day we embarked in two trucks, driving north from the city into rural Guatemala. Our first stop was the village of San Martin. We wanted to investigate the charges of a number of U.S. congressmen and senators who wrote letters to the State Department claiming that President Jose Efraim Rios Montt's government "had not moved decisively

to restore respect for human rights and democracy..." and that "...thousands of Guatemalan farmers were under protracted siege by the army in the town of San Martin, Jinotepeque in Chimaltenango Department." The legislators' accusations were based directly on information provided by several Latin American leftist groups in Washington.

We pulled into the village and purchased a few tamales from smiling, colorfully dressed Indian girls, who went back to their animated conversation with a few soldiers stationed there. We were then briefed at city hall by Mayor Jose Hernandez, county development representative Rudolpho Caceres and commander of the San Martin military garrison, Capt. Victor Bravo. They were more amused than anything else when we told them



Guatemalan airborne base commander, Col. Garcia, presents jump certificate to John Donovan and SOF staff. Note Guat wings over Donovan's left breast. To his right stand John Metzger, Craig Nunn, Robert K. Brown and Ralph Edens.



that the town and thousands of farmers were under siege by the army — at least that's what many American politicians believed since it was reported as fact in the Western press 20 October 1982. They assured us that the farmers were quite content to have the army there — with the guerrillas gone they could get back to work.

At San Martin, we got our first look at Guatemala's successful civic-action program at work (see "Bullets and Beans in Guatemala," SOF, March '83, p. 84) and saw how the village, which was once controlled by the subversives, was now functioning on its own again with the help of the military.

"The people of the community are very happy with the peace that has returned to their area," said Mayor Hernandez. "They await the rainy season so that the production of food — and life — can continue as normal. We are optimistic that the subversive movements will never again rise here or repeat the horrible things they have done."

"The situation is better in San Martin," commented Ceceres, who is working on a new tax system and farm development program for the county. "The people no longer fear the government and are returning to work."

These civil administrators understand that although they may have won the battle for their town, they might not win the war for their country. And that final battle may be decided in Washington, D.C., by politicians influenced by a left-leaning press and special-interest groups with the communist cause in mind. A clear example of this political warfare was exhibited in a letter from Senator Edward M. Kennedy to Secretary of State George P. Schultz, in which Kennedy wrote:

"In addition to the summary executions being administered for political offenses and widespread accounts of torture and murders carried out by unchecked army patrols, Amnesty International reported October 11, 1982, that Guatemalan forces had massacred more than 2,600 Indians and peasant farmers under Rios Montt's counterinsurgency program. Thousands of Guatemalan peasants have reportedly fled into Mexico as refugees from this campaign of systematic terror," and that "5,000 Guatemalans were under protracted siege by army personnel at San Martin."

Upon my return to the States, I called Kennedy's office to ask for clarification of these charges. An aide informed me that the accusations were based on a "voluminous collection of reports and testimony" from Amnesty International, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission, the Christian Democratic Party, myriad church groups — including the World Council of Churches — as well as constituents and editorials from New York and Washington newspapers.

"We have talked to Guatemalan government officials as well," Kennedy's aide told me, "and they make no pretense that they don't have problems."

Amnesty International, when contacted in Washington, told me that all their reports were assimilated in their London intelligence office. Their sources included "human-rights monitoring groups," church groups, journalists, etc. When I asked specifically how they arrived at certain figures in reports of army massacres, the Amnesty spokesman replied, "We have no evidence available to corroborate those specific figures." So much for the objectivity of Amnesty International!

Whether one agrees with Senator Kennedy or not, the fact remains that he and many other legislators are deluged with misinformation about human-rights violations in Guatemala, with hardly any reports to the contrary.

"When all respected human-rights groups and church organizations call or send letters telling of Guatemalan Army massacres, fleeing refugees, civilians being tortured and right-wing death squads, it is hard for us to refute them, since we receive virtually no reports to the contrary," said Kennedy's aide. "We therefore accept their information as being accurate."

We made it clear to the civic leaders of San Martin that their fight is our fight. "We appreciate your presence in spreading the word to the United States and assisting us in the way you have," said Mayor Hernandez. "The change in attitude in the United States has fallout benefits that filter down to the population. We hope that requests by the Guatemalan Army to the U.S. government for aid will be granted in the future, rather than neglected as in the past because of misinformation."

The mayor spoke of a woman who saw guerrillas dressed in army uniforms, painting communist slogans on walls at night. We found that some of the printed reports of atrocities allegedly committed by soldiers were actually done by guerrillas masquerading as army troops.

Leaving San Martin, we continued on to the village of Choatalum, which was also reported to be under protracted siege by government troops. In fact, the Washington rumor mill maintained that the army had massacred 5,000 Indian refugees here. We met with Choatalum's military commander, 2nd Lt. Braulio Mayen, who was an excellent example of Guatemala's professional military. When we asked about the alleged massacre, Lt. Mayen suggested that we ask some of the villagers and find out the real story. Of course, the army could have told them what to say, but even through the interpreter, we were convinced of the villagers' sincerity. They all told the same story: "The army killed no civilians here."

Later, we were to find out from the regional military commander that eight deaths had been reported in Choatalum during the period of the "massacre": four children of malnutrition and four elderly villagers from natural causes.

From our observations and talks with government officials and the people, we learned that the army and civilians are working together in Choatalum, as they are in hundreds of other villages across Guatemala. Armed civilian patrols play a big part in the continuing defense of the village. "And even with our small detachment here at Choatalum," said Lt. Mayen, "we find ourselves working with people who were on the other side." Men, who were once guerrillas before turning themselves in and receiving amnesty from the government, are now living peacefully in the community and serving on civilian patrols. Because of their intimate knowledge of guerrilla tactics, they are extremely valuable patrol members. Several young men told us that they left the guerrillas because they were tired of killing their own people — most of the army soldiers were neighbors or members of their own tribes since the army has a policy of stationing a soldier in or near his own village — or that they had become disillusioned with the rebels.

One 32-year-old man, who was about to leave on a patrol, explained:

"We were tricked into thinking that we would play a big part in taking over the government, that we would have a better life and would be given all the properties of the rich. I'll admit I'm a former participant, but they would have killed me if I didn't cooperate. They told me they would." What angered this man was that his farm animals, grain and all his possessions were stolen or destroyed as soon as he left his home with the guerrillas. "They lied to me and destroyed my life," he said vehemently.

Another ex-guerrilla and current patrol member, a 19-year old, said, "They threatened me until I joined." He left after seven months.

When asked about the alleged massacre, the former rebels, now armed with government-supplied M1 carbines, said that the guerrillas before 7 October 1982 had killed villagers and blamed it on the army. "We, as civil-defense patrols, have been in combat with the guerrillas," said one of the ex-subversives, "and they wear green uniforms similar to the army's."

"There were 174 people killed near Los Cincuentos village in April 1982 by guerrillas dressed like the army," added Lt. Mayen. "The villagers saw them and came toward them. And then they were mowed down."

"The quality of guerrilla leaders has changed, since they can't find support among civilians. The locals here have told us that if any *subversivos* are ever seen again, they will turn them in," observed Lt. Mayen, who is in charge of monitoring 23 hamlets — approximately 400 square kilometers of some of the roughest country on earth.

There are 30 soldiers and 15 civilians on patrol right now at all times. The patrol on their way out will be in the field three days, checking in hourly by radio. They not only collect military information, but also check on civilian needs in hamlets. This attitude of teamwork between the army and peasants is changing the face of war in Guatemala. Peace and burgeoning prosperity have followed in

On road tour of Guatemala, SOF was delayed by civilian road maintenance crew working on bridge. John Donovan gave them a hand. Crew is part of Guatemala's work-for-food program.





the army's path so far, and the changes brought about by the civic-action programs have been dramatic.

"The greatest need right now is to provide the displaced people of Choatalum with a roof," said Lt. Mayen as he pointed to a stack of aluminum roofing, which soldiers were using to help rebuild civilian dwellings.

"Another great need is weapons for the civil-defense patrols. A lack of weapons makes patrols vulnerable. Many members are armed only with machetes or sling shots."

Each of the 23 civil defense units from the surrounding hamlets report twice a week to Mayen. With sophisticated communications equipment at a premium (even telephones), they make it to Choatalum on foot through the jungles and mountains, whether or not there is any action to report. Looking at Mayen's map, we noticed that some of the couriers had to walk more than 40 miles.

We left Choatalum — a now-peaceful, bustling village — and headed back toward Guatemala City, stopping at Chimaltenango Military Base, the provincial command post for the Iximche Military Region. The base commander, who wished to remain anonymous, briefed us in excellent English:

"The communist guerrillas have been operating here for 20 years, starting in the northeast part of the country. They moved west and south, and found that the poor, primitive Indians were easy

Private plane lands at Nebac airstrip in Guatemalan mountains bringing in supplies to newly settled refugees. Soldiers look on and read complimentary SOFs. Photo: Robert K. Brown

prey. Two years ago, we found a couple of safehouses in Guatemala City that contained evidence of the guerrillas' strong infrastructure. The army had to come in force."

The commander swept his hand across the map, covering the mountain area north of Guat City, and explained their three-fold mission: "First, search and destroy the armed guerrillas. Second, resettle and assist those people who have been displaced or harmed by the guerrillas. And finally, we have to support those who come back to our side."

The commander showed us some of their captured arms: Russian grenades, a homemade claymore, a homemade 10-gauge shotgun, a couple of M16s and an UZI. They had even captured several factories which manufactured the homemade weaponry. He told us that the Guatemalan Army has had difficulty locating sporadic guerrilla supply routes but added, "We have captured some trucks and vans and so we know that they get M16s in this area. But we don't know from where." The army has given all the captured M16 serial numbers to the U.S. State Department, but after 10 months, they have still heard nothing.

Could it be that someone in the State Department has *purposely* delayed the investigation of the serial numbers? Very likely, as it is not that difficult to trace the numbers to see where those guns came from. Intelligence like that can be important. "The guerrillas have things that we don't have," said the commander. "For instance, we have M79s but no ammo. They have M79s and ammo. We assume that most of the M16s came from Nicaragua. We are trying to trace them."

In Guatemala, there have been no reports of Vietnamese advisers, only Cubans and Nicks, for the most part. But villages formerly occupied by guerrillas exhibit similarities to what Americans found in Vietnam: tunnels, punji stakes, booby traps, etc.

According to the commander, guerrilla organization is divided into three major groups: ORPA (The People's Armed Revolutionary Organization), FAR (Armed Revolutionary Forces) and EGP (The Guatemalan Army of the Poor). Recently, members of each group went to Cuba to try to consolidate as one organization with one name, the URNG (United National Revolutionary Union), but nothing has filtered down to a tactical level.

ORPA is the most aggressive guerrilla group, but EGP has been most successful in political action. ORPA is Cuban-directed, with power in the elite faction of the infrastructure; EGP is more effective politically because it tends to spread its power among the subversive cells. "We must first identify the hardcore guerrilla leaders," said the commander, "and then you must know who to forgive."

On 10 February, Guatemalan Civil Air Patrol pilots picked us up at the main airport in Guatemala City in a Piper Seneca, a Beech Bonanza and a Cessna 182 to transport us upcountry. Our first stop was Huehuetenango, the geographical center of operations against the subversive movement in Guatemala. Last year this large base was under guerrilla control. The guerrillas burned hospitals and schools, and terrorized the populace.

At the army-base headquarters, we were briefed by Col. Mendez and Maj. Robert Lopez, the base S-5 and S-3 respectively. They were both open and frank. "We have nothing to hide," Mendez assured us. They showed us a large wall map, indicating areas of enemy operation, complete with guerrilla cover names for different regions: *Departamentos* Indonesia, Laos, Liberated Rhodesia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Saigon, Granada — named *after places* in which the communist movement has been successful.

"In the Department of Huehuetenango, there is one civilian soldier for every five town members, so 20 percent of the civilian population is involved in civilian patrols," said Lopez. "We don't have enough army units to secure this area, so

we rely heavily on civilians. Our mission is to protect the civilian populace and to wipe out the rebels, especially the few well-trained hardcore guerrillas."

We got a good look at the army's "bullets-and-beans" policy in Huehuetenango. The civic-action and work-for-food program implemented by the military is working, primarily because it was well-planned and executed.

"We are trying to get involved with the population and *live* with them so they will trust us. We go into an area and stay there," said Lopez.

The hearts-and-minds program of the Guats could be compared to what the United States attempted in Vietnam —

except that it's being done by Guatemalans in their own country where there are few language barriers and — the most important difference — theirs is working.

Guatemala's military regime has neutralized most of the guerrilla strongholds in the country's interior. Now the biggest problem is the guerrilla front working out of Mexico, where Guatemalan refugees have mingled with the native population. Over 20,000 Guatemalan refugees are reportedly living in Mexico for a variety of reasons. Some became refugees when the guerrillas took control of their areas; some were forced to go with the guerrillas; some are collaborators; still others sought safety after the guerrillas told them the Guatemalan government would

kill them. But now, many refugees are returning, and the army is busy helping them to return to their original homes.

Media all across the United States reported in early February that Guatemalan Army soldiers made cross-border raids on refugee camps in Mexico, where they killed and kidnapped many civilians.

We asked Maj. Lopez how many people the army killed when they went into Mexico. With some effort, he controlled his initial anger and let us know, in no uncertain terms, that no Guatemalan troops went across the border.

After our briefing with Maj. Lopez, we met with Col. Mendez, who was an odd combination of Thomas Jefferson, John Belushi and Johnny Carson all rolled into one — a citizen-soldier/comedian en-



thusiastically rebuilding the Department of Huehuetenango.

"The subversives have destroyed the majority of local government in this state. Teachers, mayors and military commanders in each town were killed," explained Mendez. "Then they placed their own leaders in charge of each hamlet. By March 1982, the guerrillas controlled the entire state of Huehuetenango."

Mendez went on to describe the bullets-and-beans program. "It's basically quite simple. Since Guatemala has a high percentage of unemployed workers and relatively little money, we offer the unemployed the equivalent of our minimum wage of \$3.20 per day in food for roadbuilding, agricultural and community-service work. This at least keeps peo-

ple from starving and gets the population involved with the government to improve their situation."

Campeños and returning refugees are given an opportunity by the army to make a living — to build churches, schools and civic buildings for their own communities. And they can see and benefit from the fruits of their own labor, taking pride in their work. Though excellent progress is being made, they still need help, especially technical assistance to modernize their agriculture, and to build or rebuild towns.

"We are not asking for weapons to kill people," said Mendez, "but we are asking for shovels, rakes and the basic technologies to rebuild our country. We want machinery. We need help marketing our products. We live off the land, but we

Guatemalan soldiers armed with Galil rifles at new village of Nebac. Sgt. Maj. Cordona (in red beret) looks on as trooper shows SOF staff FN MAG.



need to bring in money by exporting our coffee, bananas, oil, potatoes and sugar."

The real revolution in Guatemala is the Rios Montt government's effort to integrate the large Indian population into the mainstream of the country's political and cultural life.

"After 400 years of being forgotten, it's impossible for the Indians to trust us again in eight months," said Mendez. "But little by little, the Indians and the rural population in general realize that someone is caring for them. And this is the best weapon against subversion. The soldier is now an extension of the people. He was prepared by the army for the new concept of work in the new Guatemala."

We left Huehuetenango base and flew toward the Mexican border. Dotting the steep slopes below us were tiny hamlets in which villagers somehow scratched out a living on the mountainous terrain, accessible only by miles of goat-trail switchbacks. It was easy to imagine that these mountain dwellers — so removed from the rest of the world — lived in complete ignorance of the war being waged in the valleys below.

Landing on a high one-way strip in the mountain village of Ixcayix, we milled about the airstrip with some Indians and soldiers who were hanging around together. I hopped back in the Cessna and took a five-minute flight over the border to photograph a large refugee camp run by guerrillas inside Mexico. The guerrillas operate out of these safe areas much as the VC and NVA operated out of Cambodia in the Vietnam War.

Flying out of Ixcayix, we made our way over jagged jungle to a village called Nebac. En route, we saw smoldering huts on steep hillsides, torched by guerrillas who thought the residents were not cooperating with their movement. Nebac is a new village, built for refugees who survived a recent guerrilla massacre. It was now home to the displaced civilians of the old Nebac town — and the people whose huts we saw burning, if they were still alive. About 38 civilians were killed here by the guerrillas. But rumors circulating out of Mexico blamed the army for the killings, and that's how it was reported in the Western press.

We talked to Sgt. Maj. Cordona, military commander of Nebac:

"As you can see the villagers feel safe here. All the homes are close together for security, since there are still guerrilla bands around." I asked him if he believed the army would eventually defeat the subversives. "If we had the chance to fight them face to face, they would all be dead," said Cordona. "The guerrillas do not have God with them."

After inspecting the new homes built jointly by the army and villagers, we headed back to Guatemala City. The next day, the SOF team headed for another Central American war: El Salvador.



SOF Demolitions Editor John Donovan examines captured homemade 10-gauge shotgun at Chimaltenango military base.

We arrived at Ilopango Air Base, San Salvador, on 11 February and were met immediately by members of the U.S. military group and Col. Bustillo, chief-of-staff of the El Salvadoran Air Force. In his

THEIR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT

Based on discussions with Salvadoran officials about how SOF could contribute to their efforts to defeat the leftist guerrillas and stabilize El Salvador, SOF is embarking on our own aid program to El Salvador. SOF has agreed to: 1) help sponsor an orphanage operated by the Salvadoran Air Force; 2) research the possibility of getting various veterans organizations to sponsor specific airborne units and 3) put together a medical maintenance team to instruct the Salvadoran Army in the care and maintenance of medical equipment.

Right now, SOF is anticipating a seven-to-10 day tour of El Salvador by qualified personnel (former U.S. Army personnel with MOS 35G, 35S and 35T). SOF will pay expenses but no salaries. (Individuals interested in any of the above should contact Alex McColl or Tom Reisinger at SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, or call (303) 449-3750.

It is important that SOF readers write, in their own words, letters of support for U.S. aid to El Salvador and send them to the House Foreign Affairs Committee (2170 Rayburn

Bldg., Washington, DC 20515) and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (42299 Dirksen Bldg., Washington, DC 20510). SOF also encourages readers to send a copy of their letters to the president, and their congressmen and senators. Contact your local newspapers for their Washington addresses. Letters supporting increased aid to El Salvador should also be sent to local newspaper, radio and TV editors.

Such efforts do not go unnoticed. Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn.), who opposes aid to El Salvador, says that he has received thousands of letters opposing U.S. aid to El Salvador, and only four or five supporting it. Balance out this inequity. Let our leaders know how Americans really feel about the critical situation in Central America. Individual letters to lawmakers and the media are important — they are read and do influence decisions.

SOF is considering organizing a tour of El Salvador and Guatemala for a serious look at the military-social-economic-political problems of the two Central American countries. Anyone interested in more information on this should contact SOF, Attn: Central American Tour, at the address listed above. ✕



briefing room, Bustillo told us, "You need to give the American public the real picture, rather than what's been reported. I'm very glad to have you here. Correct the misinformation of the left."

We found the situation in El Salvador to be similar to Guatemala, but much more critical. They know all too well that the war here will be won by U.S. public opinion. And that's where we need to help. It is usually not by force of arms that the communists bring a country down, it is by manipulating public opinion to their advantage.

Left-wing guerrilla supporters and press are using El Salvador as a base for a well-orchestrated, sophisticated, effective disinformation program in an
JULY/83

SOF team at Ilopango Air Base prior to tactical combat jump with El Salvadoran airborne. Left to right: Robert K. Brown, John Metzger, John Donovan, Alex McColl, Ralph Edens and Craig Nunn.

attempt to isolate the anti-communists in Central America from U.S. support.

Two members of the U.S. training team drove us through the city to our hotel. "This time last year, driving through town from the airport as we are, we could almost expect to get in a gun battle," said the U.S. Army sergeant. Now San Salvador is the only place in this country that one might call secure. It

quickly became apparent that El Salvador is the front line. It is to Guatemala and Honduras what Nicaragua has been to El Salvador. If this tiny country falls, guerrilla activity will increase in Guatemala and Honduras until they fall, and Mexico will not be far behind. The relative quiet we found in Guatemala may be partially attributable to the many Guatemalan guerrillas fighting in El Salvador. They no doubt expect to return to Guatemala after El Salvador falls and bring their war home again.

The problem for U.S. advisers here is that they are dealing with field-grade officers with no combat experience. They want to fight in Napoleonic columns, and have difficulty adapting to the small-unit

tactics necessary to win a guerrilla war. Guatemala, on the other hand, has a much more effective counterinsurgency military program because it has been fighting Castro-sponsored guerrillas since the early '60s, whereas El Salvador has been fighting its battle for only three years.

"There is a cadre of good, young officers who want to fight the war in the right way," said the sergeant, "and they could do it. But the problem is that they know they would disrupt the government and might cause cessation of U.S. aid. There is an 'old-boy' system here, all right. You've got a country that had elections last March. Maybe by next year, they'll have a constitution. We've only given these guys a year."

We asked if El Salvador had a repatriation policy like Guatemala. "We have had no luck," said the sergeant. "The Salvos are so damn revengeful, unlike the Guats. They have been fighting for themselves for only three years, so they aren't as professional as the Guats. Here, it's management by crisis rather than management by plan. On the other hand, the guerrillas will capture a bunch of soldiers and let them go. This is actually worse than killing them.

"El Salvador has nothing to compare to a bullets-and-beans or food-for-work program. All we have to show after the year I've been here is more firepower on both sides."

El Salvador, only 125 miles long, is split in two by the Lempa River and only two bridges remained up at the time of our visit. The guerrillas control the eastern mountains and some parts of the south-central region. There is a small mountain range just east of San Salvador where 1,500 guerrillas are entrenched.



El Salvadoran parachute team jumpmaster makes theatrical exit from C-47 over village of Ahuachapan.

When the Salvos hear trouble, they will send in five or more battalions to surround those 1,500 guerrillas.

"We tell them they can't do it," said the sergeant. "We tell them that they aren't fighting Honduran infantry. But they go anyway. Once they commit, they can't lose face so they won't pull out. And, of course, the guerrillas get away."

As far as guerrilla supply lines go, it appears that infiltration of troops and equipment are both coming from all di-

rections. Every night, light planes and choppers fly in from Nicaragua and Honduras to land at the many airstrips in El Salvador. In so small a country, with a population of 5½ million, the army is keeping inefficiently busy.

Early the next morning we were back at Ilopango Air Base to jump with the airborne battalion. It was hurry-up-and-wait as we expected. A selection of MC-119 B model parachutes suddenly materialized from a storage room and we 'chuted up. We boarded an ancient C-47, with its engines running. We had no briefing from the jumpmaster and were surprised to find the right half of the plane filled with light-blue uniformed members of the *Equipo Militar Paracaidista Acrobatico El Salvador* (the Military Parachute and Acrobatic Team, El Salvador's version of the U.S. Army's Golden Knights). We greeted each other with inquisitive smiles, then took off.

We couldn't see out the windows and we didn't know where we were going. We thought the Salvos were going out first. But after 20 minutes in the air, our side of the plane was told to hook up. And out we went. I looked down as I exited and saw that I was directly over a good-sized village: lots of huts, fences, power lines, stakes — all kinds of nasty things to land on. And then I peeked over my reserve. Directly below was a soccer field, with an "X" in the middle of it. Our American jumpmaster put everyone out right over the DZ. I guess you can expect the best from a U.S. Army airborne soldier.

The field was as hard as rock. We all came away with bruises, but no serious injuries. Within minutes of landing, the whole field was filled with the entire vil-





SOF staff and El Salvador parachute team pose in front of impressive castle headquarters of Ahuachapan Military District after jump into village.

lage, or so it seemed. Over a thousand people came to greet us, wide-eyed in wonder. Who were these gringos in black fatigues and why had they dropped from the sky into our village, they wanted to know. Why, SOF staff, of course. Goers and doers.

The village was called Ahuachapan, and it so happened that it was their patron saint's day. We took a few pictures and shook a few hundred hands as we watched the El Salvador jump team make stand-up landings amidst a cheering crowd.

Then we mounted up in long flat-bed trucks for a short drive to Ahuachapan military district headquarters, which turned out to be a large, medieval-style castle overlooking the town. We shared a meal in the officer's mess with our fellow jumpers, and then got on the trucks for the two-hour ride back to Ilopango. Since the route was through guerrilla country, the soldiers kept a sharp eye out, M16s at ready. We didn't get ambushed.

Our group split up the last two days in-country. Brown, Donovan, Nunn and McColl went out on an afternoon aerial recon with the air force, and two unidentified American vacationers and I went to observe troops of the American-trained Belloso Battalion fighting in the northern province of Morazan.

Continued on page 81

SOF staffers stand amidst curious crowd on soccer field drop zone in Ahuachapan village. Photo: Ralph Edens



ISRAEL'S DEADLY DESERT FIGHTER

SOF's Kokalis Evaluates Galili's AK

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



SAR — with optional 50-round magazine — on rock 'n' roll shows little muzzle climb. Note bolt moving forward to chamber another round.

THE Galil rifle is a phoenix, risen from the ashes; a result of lessons learned by Israeli desert fighters in the 1967 Six-Day War. Very much the progeny of my friend, Israel Galili, chief weapons designer for IMI (Israeli Military Industries), and Yaacov Lior, the Galil is a somewhat successful attempt at Candide's "best of all possible worlds."

Dissatisfied with the 7.62mm NATO FN FAL with which the Israeli Army was largely equipped, as it has always been a poor performer in high sand and dust environments, Galili went directly into the field to investigate the problem (see "Weapons Wizard Israel Galili," SOF, March '82). He was told by everyone that the Kalashnikov was the "tiger of the desert."

Taking what he needed from the AK-47, Galili placed his rifle in competition with the M16A1, the Stoner 63, the AK-47, the HK 33 and a design by Uziel Gal. The test's greatest emphasis revolved around performance under arid-region conditions. The Galil emerged as the clear winner and won the Israeli Defense Award. It was officially adopted by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in 1972. More than a decade later, it is now finally available through Magnum Research, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 2825 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418), its exclusive importer, in BATF-

approved semiautomatic versions. The selective-fire versions are available to law-enforcement agencies and qualified Class 3 dealers.

Although also produced in caliber 7.62mm NATO to increase its sales on the world market, the Galil rifle as issued to the IDF is chambered for the 5.56mm NATO M193 ball ammunition.

The Galil's Kalashnikov heritage is apparent, even at first glance. Not so evident are its differences. It fires from the closed-bolt position and is gas-operated without an adjustable regulator. The change in caliber, from 7.62x39mm ComBloc to 5.56mm NATO, required numerous alterations. The AK-47's 4.2mm gas hole was reduced in diameter to 1.8mm. The Galil's most immediate predecessor was the Finnish Valmet M62 rifle and, in fact, early Galil prototypes were fabricated using M62 receivers made in Helsinki. However, as the 52,000 cup SAAMI (Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute) pressure limit specified for the 5.56mm NATO round is far greater than that developed by the 7.62x39mm ComBloc cartridge, Galili abandoned the pinned and riveted, stamped sheet-metal receiver of the Valmet M62/M76 series and went to a heavy milled forging.

In addition, the Galil does not utilize

the usual Kalashnikov barrel-extension unit for lock-up of the bolt. The bolt lugs lock into recesses milled into the receiver body itself. Thus, heat dispersion occurs more rapidly, the cartridge remains cooler and the possibility of a cook-off, even under the most intensive full-auto conditions, is minimized.

While the method of operation is identical to the Kalashnikov, Soviet AK-47 parts most certainly cannot be used in the Galil, contrary to the statements of others. When the trigger is pulled, the hammer drives the firing pin forward to ignite the primer. Kalashnikovs have inertia firing pins without a spring. The initial lot of Galils brought into this country also had no firing pin springs. Military primers have hard cups, not easily touched off. American commercial ammunition, Winchester in particular, has relatively soft primer cups. The Winchester ammo caused several slam-fires and all Galils offered for sale in the United States have now been fitted with strong firing pin springs. If yours does not, have it retrofitted before firing commercial ammunition.

After ignition of the primer, a portion of the propellant gases migrate into the 1.8mm vent, drilled at a 30-degree angle into the gas block which is pinned to the barrel. The gas enters the cylinder (to which a small spring has been attached to secure its retention during reassembly) and drives the piston rearward. The piston is hard-chrome-plated for ease of maintenance. It is also notched to provide a reduced bearing surface and permit excess gas blow-by. The bolt carrier is attached to the piston. After a short amount of free travel, during which time the gas pressure drops to a safe level, the cam slot engages the bolt's cam pin and the bolt is rotated and unlocked as the carrier moves rearward.

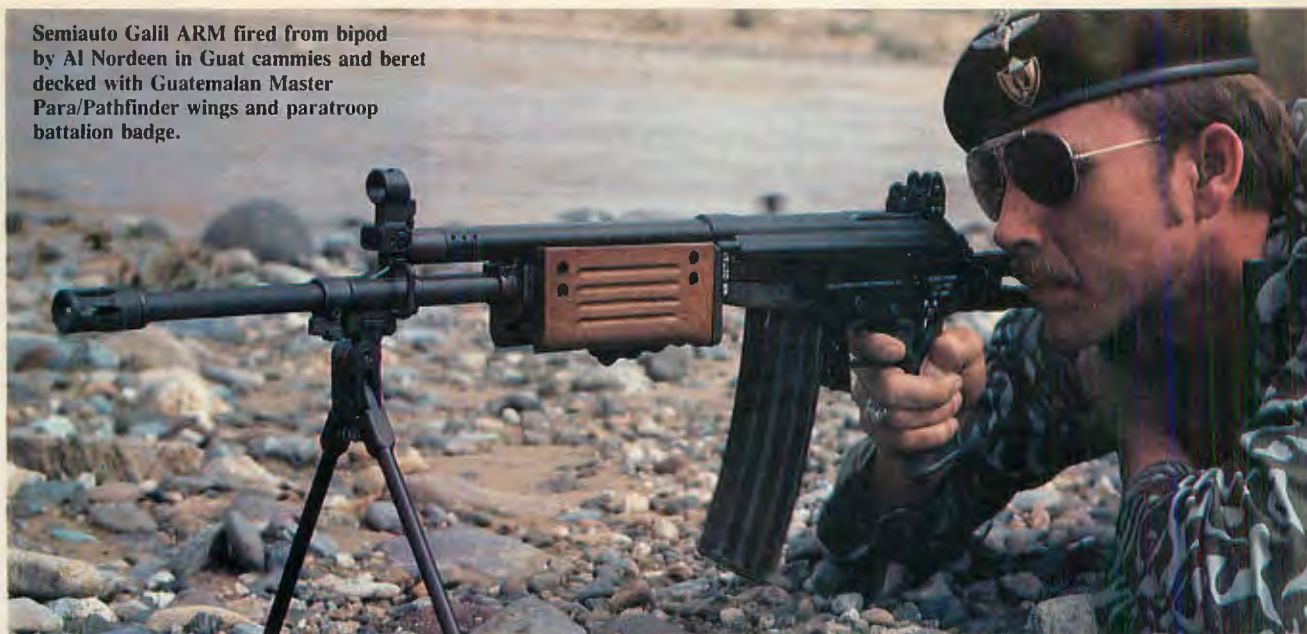
Primary extraction occurs as the bolt is rotated and thus the massive Kalashnikov-type extractor claw is not required. Empty-case ejection is typically violent. The cases are severely dented by the ejector and thrown to the right and front by as much as 40 feet (a defect with regard to position disclosure). At this time, the recoil spring is compressed and its return energy drives the carrier forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it.

The Galil's hammer spring is made of multi-strand cable. The trigger and sear springs are conventional coil types. Like other Kalashnikov-system rifles, the trigger mechanism is that first used in the U.S. M1 Garand rifle.

The Galil's right-side selector lever is the same stamped, sheet-metal bar common to all Kalashnikovs. South African troops often wrap nylon line around this selector bar to quiet the sound of its manipulation. It can also be slightly bent to draw it away from the receiver notches.

The top position, marked "S," is safe, where the trigger is locked and the

Semiauto Galil ARM fired from bipod by Al Nordeen in Guat cammies and beret decked with Guatemalan Master Para/Pathfinder wings and paratroop battalion badge.



bolt can be retracted only far enough to inspect for a chambered round in this position.

The Galil also features a selector switch on the receiver's left side, intended to be manipulated by the thumb of the trigger hand. On the semiauto version, through use of a two-piece hinged bar inside the receiver, the rearmost position of this selector is safe and pushing forward with the thumb will place the weapon in the firing mode, marked "F." This is as it should be. However, on the selective-fire model the rearmost position is "R" (British terminology for Repetition, or semiauto), the middle position is "A" (full auto) and the forward position is safe. Thus, to come off safe, using the left-side selector, one must pull rearward with the thumb, a most unnatural and awkward maneuver, especially under stress.

On the selective-fire Galil, two sears control the firing mechanism, the trigger sear and a safety sear. In full-auto fire the trigger sear is held back and only the first round of the burst is fired off this rear sear. Subsequently, the bolt carrier moves rearward and rolls the hammer over. The safety sear continues to hold the hammer back until the bolt carrier is fully forward again, at which time it trips the safety sear and the hammer rotates to fire another round. Thus, after the first round the trigger sear is deactivated entirely from control on the hammer. Releasing the trigger will catch the hammer on the trigger sear once more. In semiautomatic fire, no pressure is placed on the trigger sear, which is free to catch the hammer each time it is rolled back by the bolt carrier.

The entire safety sear assembly (sear, spring, cross pin and trip lever) is absent from the semiautomatic-only version of the Galil. In addition, certain receiver mill cuts have not been made, the hammer spring pin protrudes from the right

side of the receiver to stop further downward travel of the selector lever and the bolt carrier has been altered to prevent full-auto fire. Unauthorized attempts to convert this rifle to selective fire would be most difficult and quite dangerous.

There are three basic configurations of the Galil, all available in calibers 5.56mm NATO or 7.62mm NATO: The ARM is equipped with a bipod, wooden handguard and carrying handle. It is intended for use as an assault rifle and squad automatic weapon. The AR is equipped with a high-impact-plastic handguard without a bipod or carrying handle. The barrel length of both, in caliber 5.56mm NATO, is 18.5 inches with the flash suppressor (and 21.0 inches for the 7.62mm NATO models). Both are available in semiauto-only and selective-fire versions. The SAR is a short-barreled version of the AR model. It has a barrel length of only 13.5 inches in 5.56mm (15.8 inches in the 7.62mm version) and, as a consequence, is available in the United States as a selective-fire weapon only. Its gas tube and piston are 1 1/8 inches shorter than the other models. The 5.56mm NATO Galils all have six-groove barrels with a right-hand 1:12-inch twist for the M193 ball projectile. All three are normally issued with a folding stock, although a wooden buttstock is an available option.

At first glance, the folding stock appears to be that of the FN FAL. It is not. The FAL stock is constructed of tubular aluminum. The Galil folding stock is fabricated from tubular steel — stronger, but heavier. More important, the Galil stock has no button latch to confound the operator in opening or closing, no small consideration during high-stress situations.

The ARM's carrying handle is almost identical to the Belgian FAL's. Located to the rear of the wooden handguard, it

is not positioned over the rifle's center of mass.

The wooden handguard remains somewhat cooler during sustained full-auto fire than the black plastic handguard. The squared-away shape of the wooden handguard is not entirely comfortable, but necessary to store the bipod. Both the plastic and wooden handguards are attached permanently to the barrel and cannot be removed.

The Galil bipod is a sturdy, rigid affair, certified so by my memory of Israel Galili jumping wildly and theatrically on top of the rifle with its two steel legs extended. When stored in the handguard, the bipod serves as a feed chute to speed insertion of the magazines. The bipod can be used as a wire cutter and to open beer bottles also.

The Galil's gray-plastic pistol grip is one of the very best ever put on an assault rifle and seems to be taken from the Hungarian AKM/AMD-65 series. Of more than adequate length, with a sharp bottom flare to prevent the hand from slipping, the grip has been mounted to the receiver at precisely the correct grip-to-frame angle. Somehow, it just feels right.

Galil offers tough, all-steel magazines in three capacities: The 12-round magazine, color-coded with white stripes, is blocked to accept only ballistite (blank) cartridges for launching rifle grenades. The standard magazine has a capacity of 35 rounds. A large capacity 50-round is also available. Difficult to load by hand, it is intended for use primarily in the squad automatic role. However, like all bottom-fed magazines of this length, it will "monopod" the weapon when fired with the bipod in the prone position.

An optional magazine adapter allows the use of 20- and 30-round M16 magazines. Unfortunately, the magazine wells

of the semiautomatic and selective-fire Galils are of different dimensions and the adapter supplied by IMI can be fitted only to the semiautomatic version. Why this is so I do not know. However, the adapter is well-designed and the magazines can be inserted and released with no greater difficulty than in the M16. Valmet 5.56mm NATO magazines will likewise fit into the semiautomatic Galil, but cannot be used in the selective-fire rifle. South African R4 magazines are identical to their Israeli counterparts and can be inserted into all versions of the Galil. The magazine-release latch is of the flapper type, similar to the Kalashnikov.

The retracting handle is attached to the bolt carrier and bent upright to allow cocking with either hand, providing a useful feature.

The flash suppressor has six ports and is almost identical to the M16 "bird-cage" muzzle device. Those who still dream of charging up San Juan Hill will be pleased to note that the Galil accepts the readily available M7 bayonet issued for the M16.

The rear end of the Galil's recoil-spring guide rod, which serves as a retainer for the sheet-metal receiver cover, has been extended to ease disassembly and lock the cover more securely to the receiver body. This is especially important as the rear sight has been mounted on the receiver cover. While no less secure than its attachment to the gas cylinder on the Valmet M71, it does not provide the rigidity offered by the receiver-mounted rear sight of ComBloc Kalashnikovs. The trade-off is a longer sight radius.

Reassembly of the receiver cover on all Kalashnikov-type weapons is simplified if you first place the recoil-spring guide rod slightly below its notch in the receiver onto the rear interior wall of the receiver. Then set the receiver cover in place. Jack the retracting handle smartly to the rear and the guide rod will pop into its notch and the square-cut hole in the receiver cover.

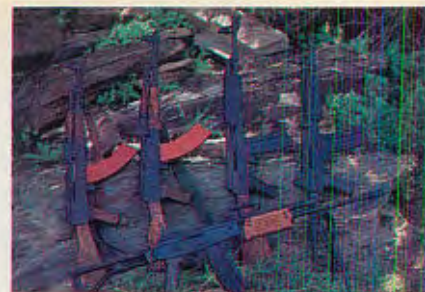
Standard Kalashnikov disassembly and reassembly procedures apply to the Galil. But, a small, though important, correction to the preventive maintenance instructions given in the IMI operator's manual is required. After cleaning, we are instructed to lubricate the gas cylinder and piston. I say no to that. Keep lubricants of all types away from the piston and the interior of the gas system. The intense heat generated in this area of a gas-operated weapon will cause lubricants to bake and varnish these parts.

The rear sight is a flip-up peep type with 300- and 500-meter apertures adjustable for elevation only. The front-post sight is adjustable for elevation and windage zero. Elevation adjustments are by means of the UZI front-sight tool. Windage adjustment is achieved by

loosening and tightening the two opposing screws which move the entire front-sight assembly in its dovetail on to the gas block. The diameter of the front-sight hood is such that it forms an additional aiming circle just within the rear aperture to further assist sight alignment and speed target acquisition.

Taking another cue from the Valmet, the Galil is equipped with tritium (betalight) night sights set for 100 meters. To use, at dusk or night, the front betalight is folded up to expose a vertical bar, which is aligned between the two rear luminous dots. When the rear tritium sight is flipped up for use, the rear peep sights must be placed in an offset position midway between the two apertures.

The left side of the receiver is dovetailed for a scope side-mount. Mounting a scope on the receiver body usually results in maximum stability. But the IMI side-mount has exhibited a decided tendency to lose zero after take-down and remounting. As a consequence, Magnum Research, Inc. plans to market a Weaver-type base attached to the sheet-metal receiver cover (usually the worst place to mount a scope). The initial units will be equipped with the excellent Leatherwood ART II scope (see "State-of-the-ART Scope," SOF, May '82).



Kalashnikov family portrait: (left to right) North Korean AK-47, Maadi AKM, Valmet M71/S, Galil SAR and (below) semiauto Galil ARM.



Although some distance from weapon's center of gravity, carrying handle is otherwise direct copy of FN FAL.

GALIL SPECIFICATIONS

	ARM	AR	SAR
Caliber	5.56mm NATO	5.56mm NATO	5.56mm NATO
Weight, empty	9.6 lbs. (with bipod and carrying handle)	8.7 lbs.	8.2 lbs.
Length			
butt folded	29.2 inches	29.2 inches	24.2 inches
butt extended	38.6 inches	38.6 inches	33.5 inches
Barrel length	18.5 inches	18.5 inches	13.5 inches
with flash suppressor			
all barrels six groove, right-hand twist, pitch of 1 turn in 12 inches			
Sights			
front	all adjustable post type with protective hood		
rear	all flip type with apertures set for 300 and 500 meters		
night	all folding, with tritium dots		
Cyclic rate			
(selective fire models)	650 rpm (available semiauto-only also)	650 rpm (available semiauto-only also)	650 rpm (available as selective-fire only)
Method of operation:	all gas-operated, rotating bolt, magazine-fed, fire from closed-bolt		
Price	\$1,499	\$1,399	\$1,399
Accessories:	magazines, 12-rd. ballistite, \$47.95; 35-rd., \$47.95; 50-rd., \$54.95; adapter for M16 magazines, \$81.95. Cleaning kit, \$23.95. Sling, \$28.95. Wood stock, \$124.95.		

Note: All the above models are available chambered in caliber 7.62mm NATO for \$100 more respectively.

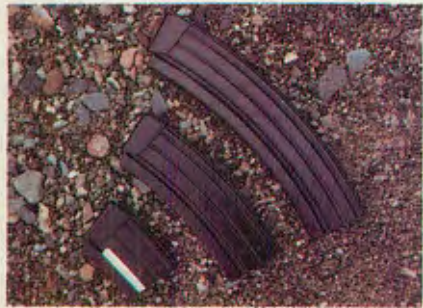
Manufactured by Israel Military Industries, Tel Aviv, Israel. Imported by Magnum Research, Inc., Dept. SOF, 2825 Anthony Lane South, Minneapolis, MN 55418.



Slick new Redi-Mag speed-loader holds one spare box.



Extra-wide webbing and outsize spring hooks make Galil sling one of the strongest and most comfortable.



Sturdy steel Galil magazines (left to right): 12-round box for ballistite grenade-launching cartridges, standard 35-round mag and hard-to-load 50-round.



Distinctively flared SAR pistol grip (copied from Hungarian AKM/AMD-65) and selector switch overlay rear of receiver of semi-auto ARM, showing awkward back-swing of SAR select-fire switch, corrected in ARM.

The Galil issue sling is admirable. Constructed of heavy, wide, black webbing with sturdy steel hooks at each end that rotate 360 degrees, it is easily the best assault rifle sling I have ever seen. Designers in the past have often neglected this piece of equipment, yet it is important to those in the field.

After phosphating (Parkerizing), all exterior metal surfaces on the rifle (except for the barrel, gas block and front sight) are finished with semi-gloss black enamel.

An interesting after-market accessory has already surfaced for the Galil. Produced by J.F.S., Inc. (Dept. SOF, 515 Gordon, P.O. Box 1892, Klamath Falls, OR 97601), the Redi-Mag fast-action speed loader attaches in minutes to the left side of the receiver next to the magazine well. The Redi-Mag holds one spare magazine. By means of a connecting catch bar, its operation is synchronized with the rifle's magazine-release latch. To manipulate the Redi-Mag, drop the muzzle about 10 to 15 degrees and, with the left thumb, press the catch bar forward while grasping the spare magazine with the left hand. While rocking the loaded magazine out of the Redi-Mag, the empty magazine will fall to the ground. Insert the new magazine and you're back in business.

I have fired several thousand rounds through both the ARM and SAR in the off-hand, kneeling, hip-assault and prone positions, and can report no stoppages of any kind. Of course, I neither threw them in the mud nor rolled over them with a truck, as such tests have already been completed under controlled and repeatable laboratory conditions by IMI. And properly so, as such tawdry, unscientific displays demonstrate nothing but the vaudevillian inclinations of the popular gun press.

The five-inch differential in barrel lengths between the ARM and SAR did provide an excuse to chronograph their respective muzzle velocities. PMC (Pusan Arsenal, Korea) M193 ball ammunition was used throughout this portion of the test and evaluation. The 18.5-inch barrel of the ARM generated an average of 3,087 fps. The stubby 13.5-inch barrel of the SAR dropped the average velocity by only 183 fps. to 2,904 fps. The extreme spread and standard deviation were significantly lower for the SAR. But, the accuracy potential of both rifles was quite high, even with trigger pulls no better than the average Kalashnikov.

In addition to high marks for hit probability and target acquisition, the SAR exhibited phenomenal controllability in the full-auto mode. The cyclic rate is 650 rpm. Muzzle rise is barely perceptible with two- and three-round bursts. In fact, firing in the off-hand position, at 30 meters an entire and continuous 50-round burst can be contained within

a standard military silhouette target!

Felt recoil was virtually nonexistent with both rifles. But, a heavy price must be paid for all these attributes.

All of the above operating characteristics are a function of the weapon's weight. At almost 9.5 pounds, empty, with bipod and carrying handle, the ARM is quite heavy in comparison with other state-of-the-art assault rifles. The M16 and AKM weigh only 7.0 pounds apiece. The Galil is only a quarter-pound shy of the U.S. M14. So what, you say? The South African troops who must constantly drag this beast through the bush have real cause for complaint. And reports to me indicate that their moaning and groaning have reached a discordant crescendo.

The Galil's weight is principally a consequence of the designer's attempt to create a weapon system which could serve the roles of submachine gun, infantry rifle and light machine gun. To date no other short-barreled assault rifle comes closer to stealing the submachine gun's final fading thunder than the SAR. With its stock folded, it measures only 24.5 inches in length. Most modern submachine guns fall somewhere between the 16.4-inch Beretta M12S and the 19.3-inch HK MP5A3. Presenting a package in size close to the SMG, the SAR chambers a cartridge far more potent at much greater ranges than the 9mm Parabellum.

As an assault rifle, the sturdy and reliable Galil is one of the very best. With a U.S. retail price of \$1,499, whether or not it is worth the cost of almost three AR15s is a question only you can answer.

It is in the role of a squad automatic weapon that it falls short of the mark. By definition of its requirement for intensive sustained fire at the squad level, the ideal SAW should incorporate a quick-change barrel, adjustable gas regulator and belt-feed potential. The Galil has none of these features; the U.S. M249 has all of them. And, as I mentioned previously, the tendency of the 50-round magazine to "monopod" the weapon when fired off the bipod in the prone position seriously compromises the Galil's ability to effectively engage targets at any small degree of elevation above the operator.

In general, the Galil system is well-executed, and a fine example of the qualities one should look for in a modern assault rifle. It stands as testimony to the brilliance of Israel Galili as a military small-arms designer and is, without doubt, his crowning achievement to date. That it is not perfect is simply an axiom which has held since the invention of gunpowder and will lead to the continued evolution of military small arms. The Galil's important position in the history of such matters is secure. ㄨ

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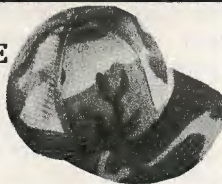
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S.H.O.T.

Continued from page 21

factory-production version of Charlie Kelsey's M-59 Devel, and has a suggested retail price of \$399.

Due to the popularity of the famous CZ-75 9x19mm and its non-import status, F.I.E. Corp. is now selling a copy of the gun. Called the TZ-75, it is made in Italy and is nearly identical to the CZ except for one major shortcoming: It lacks the single-action override feature, so popular on the CZ. Instead, the Italian copy uses a slide-mounted hammer drop safety, similar to the one found on the S&W M-39/59. Suggested retail price is \$325.

Bernardelli of Italy now offers the P 018/9, one of the finest 9mm pistols being imported today. This 14-shot, double-action blaster can be safely carried in "condition one." Armand Foley of Bernardelli is optimistic about the gun, which will retail for approximately \$700.

Mike Dixon of Dornaus and Dixon Enterprises had examples of the pilot Bren Ten pistol on display. With a newly designed firing pin safety, the preproduction Bren looks excellent. Dixon's booth was a popular one, with tradespeople showing great interest in the Bren line — especially the Bren Ten Pocket Model pistol. Suggested retail for the Pocket Model will be \$600. Look for a complete evaluation in a future issue of SOF.

S.H.O.T. Show exhibitors sported a large selection of 1911 pistol variations — including the gun that we have been waiting for from Colt for five years: the new Combat Government Model. This new member of the great .45 auto line, sure to become one of Colt's all-time bestsellers, comes standard with high, fixed combat sights, lowered ejection port, beveled magazine well, flat mainspring housing, long steel trigger and Colt/Pachmayr



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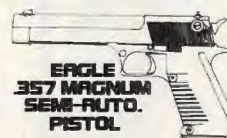
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Weight	223	308
Length (stock folded)	8.6 lbs.	8.7 lbs.
Length (stock extended)	29.8"	31.9"
Barrel Length	38.6"	41.3"
Rifling	18.1"	21.0"
Effective Range	RH, 6 grooves	RH, 4 grooves
Muzzle Velocity	1 turn/12"	1 turn/12"
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	3110 ft/sec	2820 ft/sec

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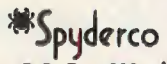
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stocks. Suggested retail is \$507. Watch for it.

Randall Firearms Manufacturing Corporation showed off its new all-stainless-steel .45-cal. 1911-style Service Model pistol. If production guns equal the degree of precision exhibited by Randall's show guns, the shooting public will have another excellent .45 auto. Standard features include high combat sights, ported slide, speed safety and custom long or short trigger. At \$440 retail, the Randall .45 Service Model may prove to be one of today's great gun values.

Arminex, Ltd., also displayed its 1911-style pistol. Called the Trifire, the weapon uses a manually operated firing-pin-lock safety mounted on the slide. The Trifire is designed to make operation as simple and safe as possible, minimizing the danger of accidental discharge. Numerous custom features are standard, and it is available in .45, 9mm and .38 Super. At a suggested retail of \$400, this gun is a good buy.

There were a number of interesting revolver variations prominent at the show, and most interesting was Detonics' large, double-action revolver. The prototype that SOF examined employs a break-open design similar to the Webley, but significantly stronger to allow for the use of magnum ammo. Although large, Detonics' revolver design offers an ideal configuration for a fast-loading wheelgun, and one that can be used with high-pressure ammo.

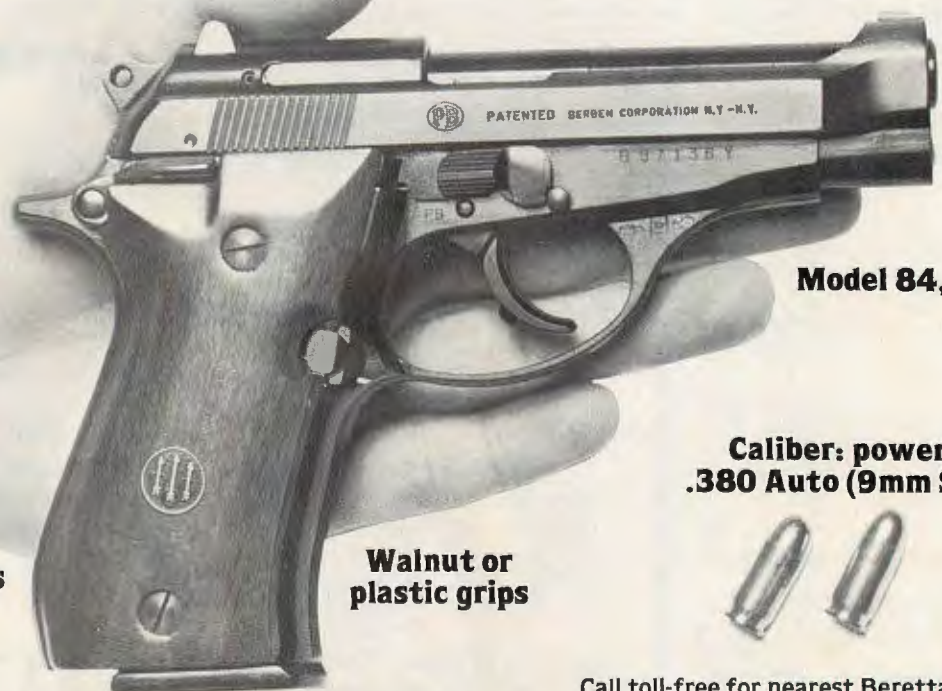
It should be in production next year.

Sturm, Ruger & Co. showed off its new .357 Maxi single-action revolver. Geared for silhouette shooters, it will retail for \$340. Ruger's popular Security Six and Service Six duty revolvers are now available in a black finish for shooters desiring the corrosion-resistant stainless, but without the shiny stainless finish. Colt displayed its new stainless Python as well as three-inch versions of the regular Python and Detective Special.

SOF saw another new trend now establishing itself in pistol marketing in such guns as the Linda, mini UZI and several Ingram-type designs. All are simply cut-down submachine-gun designs, and I question their utility. Buyers should note there are certain tradeoff limits in weapons design, and marketing often interferes with design values in "practical sidearms."

As usual, the S.H.O.T. Show '83 in Dallas was a success (and Dallas will host it again next year). It let tradespeople see what's new in the industry. But the less-than-perfect shape of the economy was evident, and some firms were not doing as well as they had in years past. We saw obvious attempts at desperation marketing in some cases: Buyers are advised to shop carefully. Not much new equipment was on display, since some firms have been forced to curtail research and development. Let's hope the economy will pick up for a profitable show next year. ✕

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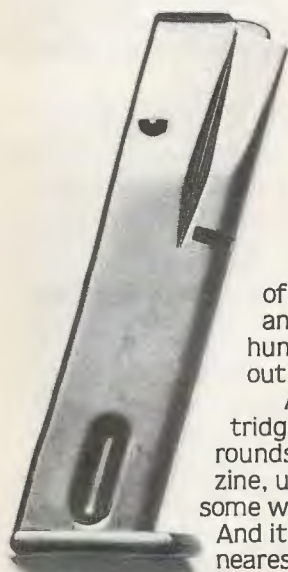
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Continued from page 32

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So close were the NVA to overrunning the company that Modrzejewski called air strikes virtually on top of the Marines' position. One Marine forward air controller, less than 50 feet from the enemy, had to plunge into a nearby stream to escape being burned by a napalm strike. The shower of bombs and napalm sent the enemy scurrying for cover. In three hours of close combat, bloodiest of the entire operation, a beleaguered Company K suffered more than 50 casualties, with some Marines hit in five or six places. When reinforcements from Company L arrived to cover withdrawal, Modrzejewski's men "formed a column of walking wounded . . . and then proceeded upstream, where the wounded were evacuated that night." For their actions, Modrzejewski and McGinty received the Medal of Honor.

24 Hours on Hill 362

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions had not seen their last of Helicopter Valley. Gen. English, after evacuating their wounded, immediately sent them back to the valley from the south to join the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment commanded by Col. Van Bell in blocking NVA infiltration. All the battalions saw action in the deadly game of cat and mouse: Marines searching for NVA, the NVA evading except for hit-and-run attacks and ambushes. A Marine summed up NVA tactics: "A probe followed by an attack with mortars, automatic weapons and small arms, then disengagement and flight." What happened on Hill 362 is a classic example.

On 17 July, Lt. Col. Edward Bronars' 3rd Battalion of the Fifth Marines began patrolling south of Helicopter Valley. A week into the patrol, Bronars ordered Capt. Samuel Glaze's Company I to establish a radio relay station atop Hill 362, three miles below the DMZ. After hacking its way with two-foot-long machetes to the crest, Glaze's 2nd Platoon descended the other side of the hill to scout defenses. It had not gone far when it met a hail of mortar and machine-gun fire. "They had everything zeroed in on the trail," First Sgt. Bill Chapman recalled. Other platoons rushed to aid the 2nd but were ambushed. Soon the entire company was trapped near the hillcrest by a steady mortar barrage. "We could only dig small trenches," said Second Lt. Robert Williams. "We put a wounded man in with a man who could fight. Every third man was wounded, but they still tried to man the weapons."

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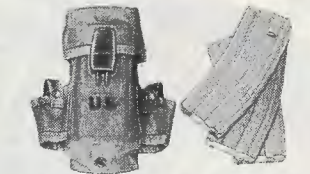
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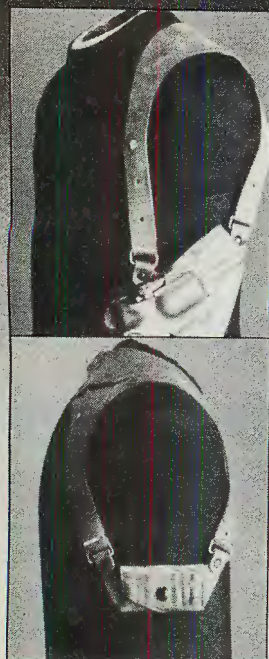
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It was a harrowing night for I Company as NVA soldiers probed to within 15 to 20 feet of the Marines' perimeter. Cpl. Mack Whieley remembers, "The Commies were so close we could hear them breathing heavily and talking." For Pfc. Michael Bednar, it was hell. Struck by a bullet, he fell near another wounded Marine just as some NVA soldiers emerged from a clump of trees. Both Marines played dead, but the NVA wanted to make sure. After the soldiers plunged a bayonet into the Marine beside Bednar and he groaned, they shot him through the head. Three times the soldiers jabbed Bednar with bayonets but he refused to cry out. Leaving him for dead, the soldiers snatched Bednar's cigarettes and watch and moved on to other wounded Marines. According to another wounded survivor, Cpl. Raymond Powell, "It was damn near like a massacre."

The next day, Marine artillery struck at NVA emplacements. Helicopters whirred in to remove the wounded, including Pfc. Bednar, who managed to crawl back to his lines "with his guts hanging out." Glaize's unit suffered a casualty rate of 45 percent — 18 dead and 65 wounded. As for the force of NVA, the *New York Times* reported that it "vanished into the countryside."

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Valley, Gen. English launched a corollary offensive, occupation of the Rockpile. There was not much to occupy, only a narrow ledge, a few feet wide, at the summit. With a lookout post perched on the region's highest peak, English could monitor NVA infiltration trails for miles in all directions. Lt. James Hart of the First Force Reconnaissance Company got the mission. Hart and his men — trained as parachutists and scuba divers — faced a tricky drop by helicopter onto the Rockpile's tiny promontory. On 16 July two helicopters hovered above the Rockpile while Hart, 12 of his men and a demolition team made jumps of six to eight feet to the ledge. Just as Hart jumped, a gust of wind jerked the helicopter upward. He fell 30 feet to the ledge and was temporarily stunned.

Hart and his men were on the Rockpile an hour when they spied 38 NVA on a trail below. A well-directed artillery strike killed all the NVA soldiers. Before lifting off the mountain two weeks later, their observations enabled artillery and air strikes to keep important trails free of further infiltration.

By month's end, it was clear that 324B had abandoned its offensive and was pulling back through the DMZ. Marine patrols discovered bodies, weapons and ammo stores left behind. The Marines overran an NVA regimental base camp containing a 100-bed hospital and 1,200 pounds of medical supplies. An account in *Time* noted, "One North Vietnamese unit apparently pulled out so fast that 500 men abandoned their field packs and left rice still cooking in open pots." As enemy contacts tapered off, Gen. English terminated Hastings at noon on 3 August.

In his after-action report to MACV, Gen. Walt was effusive in his praise for Hastings: "As a result of the battle, the 324th NVA Division suffered a crushing defeat and enemy designs for capture of Quang Tri Province were thwarted . . . It was a significant victory for the United States and represents a tribute to the courage, skill and resourcefulness of the personnel and units involved." Gen. Westmoreland was no less pleased; he was convinced that the timely execution of Hastings had spoiled NVA strategy and foiled an invasion.

The Marines exacted a stiff price from 324B for its incursion: 882 killed, 17 captured, and the seizure of 200 weapons, 300 pounds of documents and more than 300,000 rounds of ammunition. The soldiers of 324B, described by Gen. Walt as "well-equipped, well-trained and aggressive to the point of fanaticism," also showed themselves a formidable foe. In all, 126 Marines were killed and 448 wounded.

From a long-term perspective, Hastings demonstrated the problems faced by MACV forces fighting in the rugged hills of northern I Corps. Although its invasion fizzled in the jungles below the

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of a high order. I had to wonder what would happen to UNITA if he were

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looking forward to steak and bourbon in a country I'd rather not name. We drove deeper into the bush. The tsetse flies began to bite. A herd of zebra flies watched from the edge of a thicket. I passed out my last carton of cigarettes. These guys needed them more than I did.

The helicopters are another matter. He says they are excellent anti-insurgency craft because they can drop troops quickly behind a guerrilla force and can resupply isolated units in the field. Choppers were a major problem, he says, and are still

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DMZ, 324B was able to effect a successful withdrawal across it into North Vietnam, its offensive capability virtually intact. By exploiting their continuing ability to move across the DMZ into South Vietnam, 324B and other NVA divisions were able to control the tempo of combat in I Corps.

Their options included full-scale invasion and hit-and-run attacks, in addition to attempting an increasing flow of infiltration to the south. These types of NVA offensive threats caused a steady build-up of U.S. Marines from 1966 to 1968 near the DMZ. Operation Prairie, which followed Hastings, confirmed a trend which the Marines had feared. This time more Marines, 11,000 of them, would be reacting to renewed NVA thrusts, becoming tied down to a string of defensive positions along the DMZ.

As a result, one Army report concluded, "Gen. Walt, with his forces stretched to the limit and short of helicopter and logistical assets, was unable to do more than hold his own." Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap described the situation this way: "The Marines are being stretched as taut as a bowstring."

(To be continued.)

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SAVIMBI

Continued from page 39

He also says that UNITA needs outside help — not foreign troops, but anti-tank rockets, anti-aircraft missiles, medicine and diplomatic support. His view is that such help would be in the interests of the West. A sign in a dining hall in Jamba says, "UNITA, the key to Angola; Angola, key to Africa; Africa, key to the West." As he sees it, if the West doesn't have the fortitude to stop Soviet expansionism in Angola, Russia will succeed in isolating South Africa, and then get the resources of the entire continent. The result would be to bring Europe to its knees.

On 11 November, the date UNITA celebrates the departure of Portuguese colonialists from Angola in 1977, we attended the ceremonies. I thought their military significance was considerable: They showed both what UNITA can do, and what Luanda can't do.

For several days preparations were made. Huge posters of Savimbi went up around the parade deck. It is worth remembering that Savimbi is UNITA. He is the central figure that makes everything work, and his picture is everywhere. The reviewing stand, which is permanent, was draped in UNITA's flag, a rooster beside a rising sun. A crack marching unit practiced to an oddly compelling African cadence. Loudspeakers were installed.

On the day of the celebrations, thousands of people from the surrounding countryside showed up. Several large contingents of infantry stood at parade rest in front of the stands. Captured artillery and mortars stood in rows in a blazing sun. An electric band cranked up to one side. Troops marched. In short, UNITA was presenting one hell of a target from the air, in a place the enemy knew about, on a day when the enemy knew they would be there.

Nothing happened. For whatever reason, Luanda couldn't or wouldn't bomb Jamba on the big day.

Savimbi appeared and took his place on the stand, waiting as various preliminary speeches were made. Each speaker led the crowd in a few "Death to the Cubans" before stepping down.

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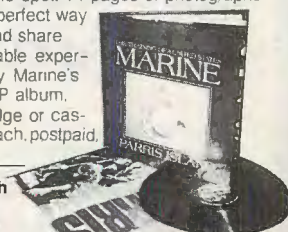
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of a high order. I had to wonder what would happen to UNITA if he were killed. His lieutenants are good men — but they don't have Savimbi's charisma. UNITA just might wither away. On the other hand, Savimbi is not easy to kill.

He knows how to make a gesture. In the middle of his speech, two white men marched up to the podium: two Russian airmen captured when the Antonov-26 went down. After two years in Angola, they were happy to hear that they were being exchanged for some Americans held captive by Luanda — and this is exactly what Savimbi told them. (See Bulletin Board, SOF, April '83 and May '83.) As it turned out, the United States ignored the favor, but the crowd in Jamba loved it. So did the Russkys. I talked to them later. They weren't bad guys.

The next day we boarded the Russian trucks for the clandestine airfield where, if things worked right, we would meet a light plane for the flight out. Our guerrillas hopped aboard, armed to the teeth and looking like the baddest-ass pirates I ever saw. I admire the poor bastards and feel sorry for them at the same time. Five years from now, they will probably be bucketing through the bush in Stars, killing Cubans and eating potato soup. Most of them have never seen ice, or maybe even a floor. We were



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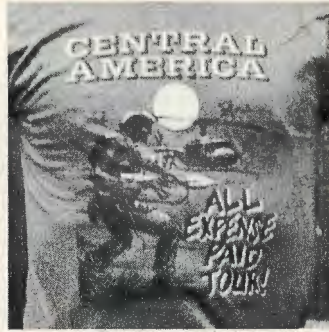
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looking forward to steak and bourbon
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We drove deeper into the bush.
The tsetse flies began to bite. A herd
of zebra watched from the edge of
a thicket. I passed out my last carton
of cigarettes. These guys needed
them more than I did.

The helicopters are another matter.
He says they are excellent anti-
insurgency craft because they can
drop troops quickly behind a guerrilla
force and can resupply isolated units
in the field. Choppers were a major
problem, he says, and are still

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something of a problem, but UNITA has largely learned how to deal with them. The heavy machine gun is the most effective weapon UNITA has for zapping helos.

Savimbi himself and all of his troops that I talked to (all three that spoke English) tell the same story of the tactical war. The Cubans can move only in heavy convoys by road or by air. Given the vastness of the bush, and the mobility of the guerrillas, a convoy isn't safe without air cover, which means that going anywhere is a big operation. The convoy gets ambushed, and ambushed and ambushed. Soon, the drivers don't want to drive.

Ten guerrillas may assemble from 10 different directions, pop a few RPGs into the nearest trucks and disappear in 10 different directions again. If the convoy isn't heavily guarded, several trucks may disappear into the bush. So may the black troops conscripted by the Cubans.

In areas without natural cover, UNITA's men dig spiderholes. They also infiltrate towns and blow up military positions. In the countryside, they try to isolate an outpost until it is low on food and ammo, and then storm it. This works — they have taken big towns — but the Cubans can mass their forces and take places back in many cases. Back and forth it goes. The regulars are used in these battles.

The future? My own analysis, which I think Savimbi would agree with, is that Luanda doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of digging Savimbi out. A hundred thousand Cubans could drive south and close down Jamba. The trouble is that UNITA's troops would all just take 50 paces backward into the bush and disappear. Americans have no idea how little this would bother them. They grew up in the bush. The difference between an Angolan village and the pure bush is a grass wall. People are used to a primitiveness that Westerners have never known.

Although a major Cuban invasion could knock out the big bases and machine shops, it would also give the bad guys about 40 times as many miles of supply lines to protect. The operative military phrase is "fat chance." And, as Savimbi says, the result would be to turn the entire country against the Cubans. It is Savimbi's view that the Russians don't want a huge, expensive war in Angola, far from their logistics bases. Consequently, the argument of the U.S. State Department that any U.S. support of Savimbi would just be an excuse for a large Russo-Cuban invasion is wrong. ☒

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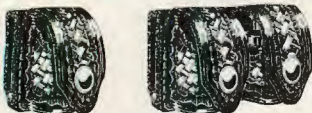
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IN REVIEW

Continued from page 12

JOHN WEEKS 1928—1983

by W.B. Guthrie

John Weeks died 1 January 1983 at the age of 54, but he still lightens our work. No day passes that SOF writers and editors do not consult the detailed, analytical, accurate books of one of the most prolific and witty military writers of the 20th century.

Those who do not know his work will be surprised that he earned this reputation as a chronicler of military technology. Best known as Editor of *Jane's Infantry Weapons*, he was also Military Editor of *Jane's Defence Review* and writer for *Defence* magazine. During his short publishing career, Col. Weeks wrote *World War II Small Arms, Men Against Tanks: A History of Anti-Tank Warfare, Assault from the Sky: A History of Airborne Warfare, Airborne Equipment: A History of Its Development*, and *The Airborne Soldier*, released just before his death. Ian Vernon Hogg — perhaps Weeks' only modern equal in military technical writing — collaborated with him on *Pistols of the World, Military Small Arms of the Twentieth Century*, and *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Military Vehicles*.

John Weeks served in the British Army from 1948 to 1978. After attending Sandhurst, assignments included the Staffordshire Regiment, the School of Infantry, the faculty of the Royal Military College of Science, liaison officer to the USAR Training and Doctrine Command and project manager at Woolwich Arsenal.

Lecturing and research as an expert in infantry weapons and directing the RARDEN gun and XL 70 E3 4.85mm Individual Weapon projects had prepared Weeks for a second career as a military journalist after his retirement from the military. The numbers of publications and prestigious appointments showed how other journalists valued his work.

This record could make the man look like an academic in uniform, but Col. Weeks' performance in the field nearly matched his writing achievement. Much of his work in military history and technology showed detailed knowledge of parachuting: Weeks' knowledge was won first-hand. He joined the British Army's Parachute Regiment in 1958, was one of the earliest military skydivers, and was a member of the British Army Parachute Team.

No biography or obituary will adequately memorialize Col. John Weeks: His work is his monument. ✕

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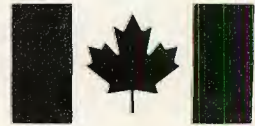
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DOORSTEP WAR

Continued from page 59

After an informative 10 days in Guatemala and El Salvador, it was time to go home, but like MacArthur, we knew that we would return. *Soldier of Fortune* will continue to cover the war in Central America in future issues. We saw firsthand that a war is being fought now for control of all of Central America — a war whose outcome is critical to the survival of all the Americas — and El Salvador is the front line, *our* front line.

SOF is getting involved directly in the fight for Central America (see sidebar, p. 56). We cannot allow another domino to

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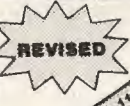
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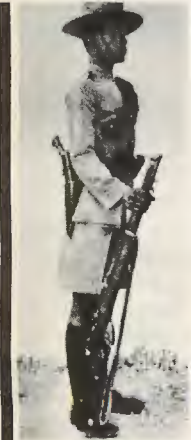
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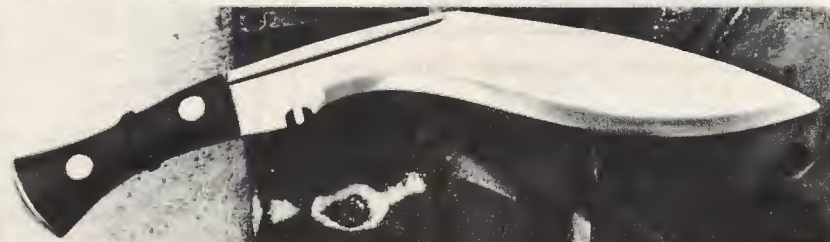
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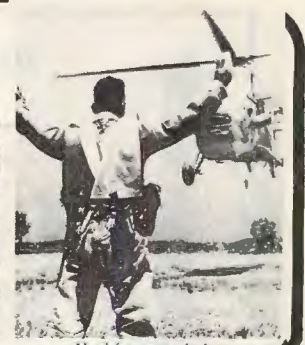
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fall as a result of misinformation which has duped American policymakers and the American public. If we think the problem of illegal aliens from Mexico is bad now, just wait until hundreds of thousands more begin to flee northward from a leftist regime. The war for Central America will be won or lost as much in Washington as on the battlefield. Their fight is our fight. ✕

WE CAN/MUST WIN IN EL SALVADOR

by Robert K. Brown

It was enlightening to get an estimate of the situation in El Salvador from "the professionals" — the Special Forces troops who are part of the U.S. Military Group (Mil Group) advising the El Salvadorans. The knowledge, dedication and experience of the Mil Group personnel I met was most impressive. The field grade officers and senior NCOs are Vietnam veterans with plenty of combat experience. The junior officers and NCOs all know their subjects. Most have participated in a number of mobile-training team exercises in other countries. All speak Spanish fluently; all are dedicated to preventing another communist insurgency from succeeding. The SOF team spent a week with several of them. Below is a summary of their views.

It's A War For Central America:
"It's not just a war for El Salvador," one U.S. Army Special Forces man spat out. "The conflict here is just one part of the war for Central America. Furthermore," he continued, "our credibility with the rest of Latin America will be largely determined by what we do or fail to do in El Salvador. We can make all kinds of excuses for losing the war in Southeast Asia — there is no excuse for losing the war in Central America."

"Who are we to insist the El Salvadoran government negotiate with the guerrillas when they had a democratic election? The key to all Central America is El Salvador, if El Salvador falls Honduras will be surrounded and Guatemala will be next. If we don't stop them in Central America, there is no question that in a few years we will be fighting them on the Rio Grande.

"However, if Nicaragua falls to the anti-communists or stops supporting the guerrillas for whatever reason," the adviser said, "the Salvadoran Army couldn't get out of their bases fast enough to chase the guerrillas."

Problems:

1. Political infighting.

The struggle for power in the El Salvador military has adversely affected the campaign against the guerrillas. The Central Commander must negotiate with his subordinates and convince them to follow his concept of operations rather than order them as he depends upon them for support. An example of political maneuvering adversely affecting the execution of the war was a power struggle between Lt. Col. Ochoa, one of the most effective Salvadoran field commanders, and the Minister of Defense, Gen. Garcia, some months ago. This conflict brought the war to a halt for two weeks as field commanders kept their troops in their bases awaiting developments. The same adviser pointed out that although it was an unfortunate incident, it did prove the military had the discipline to support

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the chain of command, though many junior officers supported the hard-charging Ochoa.

2. Lack of national strategy/co-ordination.

The El Salvadorans have no "country team" and lack national strategy for prosecuting the war. The El Salvadoran high command must define its mission and implement it with an integrated, coordinated plan.

3. Tactics/leadership.

"One of our major problems is in the area of leadership and tactics," a Mil Group adviser commented. "The senior officers still have not accepted the fact that conventional tactics cannot be used to defeat the insurgency. They still insist on conducting multi-battalion operations which have proved ineffective. They do not have sufficient troops, mobility or logistical capability to seal the insurgents in an area and eliminate them. When they try such operations, the guerrillas simply exfiltrate through the lines at will and strike elsewhere."

"It is in the best interests of the Salvadoran military to use ambushes, small-unit patrols and night operations," the adviser continued. "We think we have got our point across to Garcia and his staff, but we'll have to wait and see."

4. Lack of NCOs and junior officers.

Directly related to the above is the fact that the El Salvadorans are short of NCOs and junior officers. Somebody made a gross error in judgement a couple of years ago when they increased the size of their army three-fold but failed to take into consideration there were insufficient technicians, NCOs and junior officers to command and control such an increase. At present, only 25 officers are graduated each year from the Salvadoran Military Academy. The shortage of junior officers was somewhat alleviated by training 500 young men at Ft. Benning recently, which was successful, but also very expensive.

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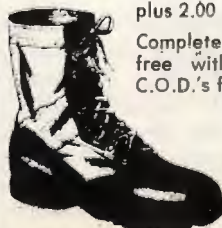
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ing any aircraft crossing the border into El Salvador, day or night. The problems, however, are twofold: These aircraft are expensive, and secondly, who would operate them? Congressional directives preclude U.S. military personnel from entering combat zones. Therefore, a solution would be employment of contract pilots, e.g. Air America-types.)

Salvadorans are also short of commo equipment. They have insufficient handsets for their PRC-77s, while the guerrillas have an excellent communication system.

While we were in El Salvador, the air force had run out of Mark 82 500-pound bombs and was short on 20mm HE ammo for their aircraft.

As one adviser bitterly put it, "How do you make a 30-day supply of ammo last two years?"

7. No civic action/psy war/amensty program.

The Guatemalans have been fighting Cuban-inspired insurgencies for 20 years and therefore have developed an effective, well-integrated, comprehensive counter-insurgency program. The El Salvadorans, on the other hand, are just now facing up to the need for an amnesty program. Their civic-action effort is spotty at best; they don't know what "psy" war means.

The insurgents have an effective release policy for captured El Salvadoran troops. Former prisoners say they have received food (what the guerrillas eat), shelter and medical care when captured. The guerrillas now carry megaphones into battle to induce the Salvadoran troops to surrender and also distribute leaflets advising, "Soldier! Your life will be respected!" These psy/ops techniques are causing great concern among the Mil Group personnel and Salvadoran officers. Many feel the average soldier will believe he can surrender during battle and survive. Salvadoran Army units have taken few prisoners during the war and, thus, the guerrillas have no option but to fight to the death.

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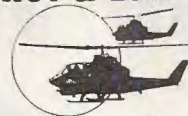
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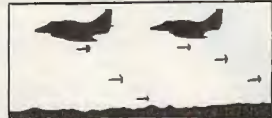
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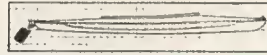
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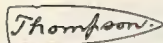
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Continued from page 17

'82; "Convention '82," March '83) luck almost ran out in Lebanon.

Dring was in a Lebanese Forces' vehicle with a driver and a French photographer in the hills above Beirut where the fiercest fighting between the Lebanese Christians and the Druse has occurred when his vehicle was attacked by a Druse firing an AKM. The driver, Paul, thinking quickly, drove toward the attacker, forcing him to fall to the ground. Paul then ran over the Druse before racing for safety. His quick action probably saved all three of their lives; as it was, all three suffered arm injuries, and had to wear slings for a few months.

The young French photographer, whose picture taking was interrupted when Dring forced her down onto the floor of the vehicle, was concerned about the Druse they had run over and upset that they wouldn't stop to see about him.

Comments Lucky Larry: "That's the caliber of journalists we get here."

NICARAGUAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS...

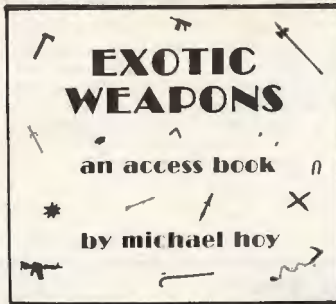
Anyone wishing to send clothing or supplies to the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters should send them to one of the following addresses rather than to SOF: LTC (Ret.) Chuck Allen, *National Vietnam Veterans Review*, p 2722 Fort Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303 or Central America Trading, Inc., Attn: Frank Morales, 9418 North West 13th St., Miami, FL 33172

SOF'S REFUGEE PROGRESS...

SOF received the following letter from Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Resettlement Coordinator for Lutheran Social Services of Colorado, concerning Giang Bang La and his family, whom Robert K. Brown brought to the United States last fall (see Bulletin Board, Feb. '83). Giang is now SOF mail foreman.

"We recently had an opportunity to stop by the warehouse to visit with Giang and to hear first hand his report on his progress of his life in America. We wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your successful participation in this sponsorship and to express our gratitude for all that you

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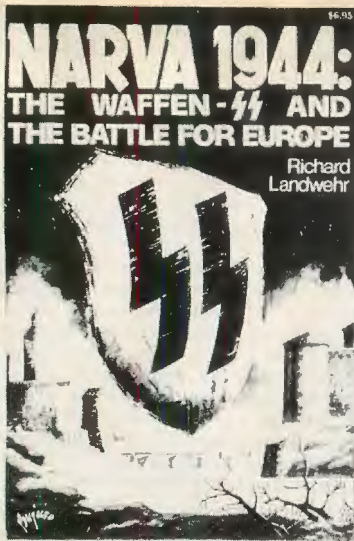
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RIVER PATROL REUNION...

The River Patrol Force (Task Force 116), also known as "Operation Gamewarden," will hold two reunions in 1983: 25 June in Long Beach, Calif., and 13 August Norfolk, Va. Among the items of business are the annual scholarship award and plans for a memorial monument. For more information, contact Mike West, P.O. Box 4066, North Hollywood, CA 91607 or John Williams, P.O. Box 523, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

TROUBLE WITH TANKS...

A young British soldier got into trouble recently for taking his military vehicle home for the weekend. The trouble was that the vehicle was a 42-ton Chieftain tank.

Philip Matton, 19, drove the tank 80 miles to his parents' home to show them how well he could drive the large tank. Police agreed with Matton that he was a good tank driver. "He drove very well," a policeman commented, "He could quite easily have knocked down a couple of houses."

Matton was arrested and returned to Bovington Camp for further investigation.

EIGHTH AIRBORNE REUNION...

The Eighth Airborne Infantry Ranger Co., which fought alongside the 24th Infantry (Taro Leaf) Division in Korea in 1951, will hold its first annual reunion in Fayetteville, N.C., 21-24 July, in conjunction with the second reunion of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. For more information contact Herman J. (Jim) Hale, U.S. Army (Ret.), 26 Annandale Dr., Rte. 5, Inman, SC 29349 or (803) 578-6228.

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FLAK



Continued from page 6

I also read the editorial on Jane Fonda with a lot of bitter thoughts. I have been upset by many people who rejected me because I was a Vietnam vet. I've felt sadness for some of them, but a complete hatred for Jane Fonda and what she did. I will never forgive nor forget.

Sam Liming
Anatone, Washington

Right on, brother. Our day will come.
—The Eds.

WELCOME TO GERMANY...

Sirs:
I am writing in response to a letter in the February '83 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*.

I am also stationed in West Germany and have been since December '80. I will not attempt to give a response to what the writer feels is wrong with the operation of his particular unit and branch of service.

What I will respond to is a particular section of paragraph 2. The Germans are not "a bunch of people who don't want us here." There is a faction, very small in number, that doesn't want us here.

The American public should not believe that because a few irresponsible people commit terrorist acts that the whole German population wants us to go home. I believe that the letter writer was not fully representing the whole situation. I was the senior Security Police representative on duty immediately after the terrorist bombing of USAFE/HQ on 31 August 1981. The German authorities I've worked with and the German people I come into contact with on a daily basis are just as concerned and appalled over recent terrorist actions as they were with the events of 31 August 1981. Recently, a young soldier was injured when a bomb blew up as he got in his car. His car was destroyed. Average, ordinary German citizens got together and donated enough money to him (about \$6,500) to replace the vehicle. That doesn't sound like "a bunch of people who don't want us here" to me.

I believe that the American public has been given the wrong impression about German/American relations. There will always be problems between people of different nations when they must live and work in close quarters. But we Americans must remember that the U.S. military is helping to ensure the personal freedoms and liberties of Americans as well as those the German people enjoy. The vast majority of the German popula-

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tion believes and understands this.

On a different note, thanks for the article on the AGS-17. I found it to be very informative because I and other USAF Air Base Ground Defenders may have to face that weapon; I'm glad I know something about it now. Keep up the good work and "Death to Tyrants!"

Capt. Marc Allen
Ramstein AB, West Germany

MORE MEN OF METTLE...

Sirs:

I have enjoyed reading your magazine for many years. Most recently, I have gleaned a great deal from your articles on old-time soldiers of fortune. The life stories of such men as Charles Sweeny and Hilaire du Berrier (see SOF May '82, Jan. '83 and Feb. '83) are most interesting. In light of this, I have a request to make of you: Would you please publish an article on the life of One-Arm Sutton (the great British SOF who operated in China during the warlord period). I have heard a lot about this particular man, most recently mentioned in your articles on du Berrier, but have never been able to find a full account of his activities in China. I do know, however, that he was an extremely brave and successful soldier who fought in WWI and later in China. I believe his life would make for a most interesting story which many of your readers would appreciate.

Brad Trainor
Clarksville, Tennessee

SOF Managing Editor Jim Graves and Hilaire du Berrier — who is one of the few men still alive who knew One-Arm Sutton well, since they spent a year plotting various schemes in Hong Kong during the late 1930s — are working on an article on Sutton at this time. Look for it in a future SOF.

—The Eds.

TIMING ERROR...

Sirs:

Just a comment on Bob Oles's fine articles on the 7th Cav at Ia Drang (see SOF Apr. '83 and March '83). The 2nd Bn, 20th ARTY (Aerial Rocket) was not known as "Blue Max" during the time frame 1965-'68. 2/20th air crews flew under the "Armed Falcon" call sign from '65 to '67, changing to "Spark Gap" in '67 and "Blue Max" in '68. A small point perhaps, but important to those of us who enjoyed being "Armed Falcons."

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ADVERTISERS INDEX

Advertiser	Page
American Pistol Institute	90
Assault Systems	4-5
Atlanta Cutlery	81
Auto-Ordnance Corporation	86
Barnett International	74
Beretta U.S.A. Corporation	66,67
Bibliophile Legion Books, Inc.	88
Brigade Quartermasters	64,74
Bruck's	64
CA, Inc.	82
Capital Cartridge Company	65
Charter Arms	10
Cobra Defense Accessories	80
Cole, Ralph	76
Collector's Armoury, Inc.	86
Combat Glasses	89
Creative Horizons	89
Courtlandt Boot Jack Company, Inc.	75
D & E Magazines Mfg.	79
DeSantis Holster and Leather Goods	70
Devil's Brigade	86
Documentary Recordings	75
Doubleday (Military Book Club)	7
Eagle Industries Unltd.	78
Ecomarine Systems, Inc.	86
Elite Forces Supply Company	81
Exotic Sports, Inc.	82
F.G.S. Surplus	90
Feather Enterprises	85
Ferde Grofe Films	81
Gardiner Electronics	89
Gemini Industries	88
Global School of Investigation	87
Golden Eagle Reader Service	11
H.K.S. Products, Inc.	80
Heckler & Koch	Cover 4
House of Weapons, Inc.	90
INCO	79
Iver Johnson's Arms Inc.	72
J.F.S., Inc.	78
Jay's Guns and Shooting Supplies	88
Jonathan Arthur Ciener	84
Kaufman's West	Cover 3
Kropp Enterprises, Inc.	91
Larc, International	83
Larder/Survival Books	84
Lifeknife, Inc.	86
Loompanics Unlimited	87
Mag-na-port Arms, Inc.	84
Magnum Research	15
Marine Military Academy	91
Matthews Police Supply Co.	85
Mil-Arm Co. Ltd.	80
Military Graphics	78
Modern Gun Repair School	91
North American School of Firearms	89
Numrich Arms Corporation	81
Olde Glory Fireworks	73
Onager International	83
Paladin Press	1
Parellex Corporation	69
Phoenix Associates, Inc.	77
Pioneer & Company	67
Police Sciences Institute	87
Pool Surplus	83
Precision Shooting Equipment, Inc.	Cover 2
Pyrotechnics	87
Quartermaster Sales	68
R & R Enterprises	82
Rebel Gun Refinishing, Inc.	89
Scientific Systems	88
Sherwood International Export	13
Silent Partner, Inc.	71
Sin Loi Production, Inc.	85
Southern Sales	72
Spyderco	66
Sullivan International Services	85
Timberwolf	76
USI Corp.	76
U.S. Optics	9
Valley Surplus	83
Wells Creek Knife and Gun Works	80
Westbury Sales Company	76
Wildey Firearms	70

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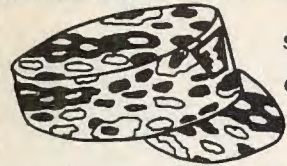
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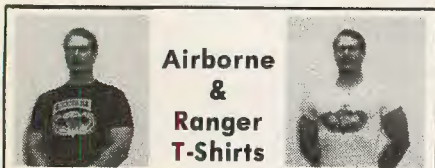
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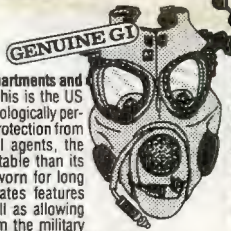
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- Brown Leaf Crew (Round) Neck
- Tiger Stripe Crew (Round) Neck
- Desert Pattern Crew (Round) Neck
- Green Leaf V-Neck

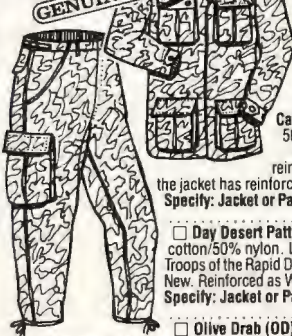
Specify Size: S, M, L, XL \$7.00/each; or any 3 shirts for \$18.00.

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Genuine Military Insignia - meeting all military specs

- Special Forces Flashies (choose from: 5th Group in Vietnam: 8th; 12th; or JFK Special Warfare Center) \$1.75/each
 - Special Forces Shoulder Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - Special Forces Crest \$3.00/each
 - Paratrooper Badge \$3.00/each
 - Air Assault Badge \$4.00/each
 - 101st Airborne Crest \$3.00/each
 - 82nd Airborne Crest \$3.00/each
 - 101st Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - 82nd Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - Ranger or Airborne Tabs (specify regular or subdued) \$1.00/each
 - Marine Recon Wing - gold plated \$4.50/each
 - Phot Wing, USAF - nickel plated \$3.50/each
 - Full Bird Colonel's Rank - Army - nickel plated \$3.50/pair
 - General's Rank-One Star-Army - nickel plated \$3.50/pair
 - Navy Seal Badge - gold plated \$10.50/each
 - U.S. Flag (2 x 3 1/4) \$2.25/each
- For a complete listing of over 1,000 military insignia items send for our Insignia Collection Catalog. Cost \$2.00 plus 86c for 1st class postage.

Battle Dress Uniforms - GENUINE GI



Pants feature: 6 pockets (thigh pockets are belted); drawstring cuffs; adjustable waist tab. Jackets feature: 4 pockets, bellows style. Tell us your chest, height, and waist measurements when ordering. Choose from:

- Woodland Pattern Camouflage - 50% cotton/50% nylon. Army's latest issue; the pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$30.00/each; \$57.50/set.
- Day Desert Pattern Camouflage - 50% cotton/50% nylon. Latest issue to Airborne Troops of the Rapid Deployment Force. Brand New. Reinforced as Woodland Pattern above. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.
- Olive Drab (OD) Green - 100% cotton, ripstop; as used in early Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$30.00/each; \$57.50/set.
- Leaf Pattern Camouflage - 100% cotton ripstop, as issued in Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.
- Tiger Stripe Pattern Camouflage - Commercial Manufacture - these are made by a US Government contractor to military specs. The tiger stripe pattern is true. They are reinforced as the Woodland Pattern Camouflage, above. 50% cotton/50% nylon. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.
- Desert Tan (Khaki) Bush Fatigues - these 6 pocket pants and 4 pocket jackets are of commercial US manufacture to military specs. 100% cotton, they are an excellent buy. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify: Jacket or Pants \$26.00/each; \$49.00/set.
- Solid Black - a favorite of SWAT teams, these fatigues were manufactured in the US by a government contractor to military specs. 50% cotton/50% nylon, these are reinforced as the GI Woodland Pattern above. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.
- Woodland Pattern Camouflage - Commercial Manufacture - we've used the genuine military Woodland Camo cloth and fashioned these like the GI fatigues. We cut some corners to trim the price, but these American made fatigues look just like the genuine ones. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$26.00/each; \$49.00/set.

Wallets, Nylon - made of waterproof nylon pack cloth

these 2 fold wallets feature 4 inside pockets, a bill compartment and plastic card holder. Choose from: Camouflage, Olive Drab (OD) Green, or Black \$6.75 each.

Jogging Shorts - Ours are stylish shorts made in the USA that feature a trim fit and fashionable good looks. Perfect whether worn for a hard workout or as trend setting fashion. Sizes are from S to XL. Tell us your waist size when ordering.

- Leaf Camouflage Pattern \$6.50/each
- Desert Camouflage Pattern \$6.50/each
- Olive Drab (OD) Green \$6.50/each
- Khaki (Tan) \$6.50/each

The following shorts are 100% cotton \$6.50/each.

- Leaf Camouflage Pattern \$8.75 each.
- GI Leaf Camouflage Pattern - 100% cotton, ripstop poplin. Our best sellers.
- GI Woodland Camouflage Pattern - 50% cotton/50% nylon.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Angle Head Flashlight - This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to basic and stealth units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation; operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box \$6.50/each; 2 for \$12.25

Shipping Costs

Orders up to \$10.00	\$2.00
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Orders from \$20.01 to 35.00	3.75
Orders from \$35.01 to 50.00	4.50
Orders from \$50.01 to 70.00	5.75
Orders over \$70.00	6.75

Canadian Orders-Send Double Amount Indicated.

Regulation GI Dog Tags - GENUINE GI

2 GI stainless steel tags, specially treated to be non glare flat black plus 2 black (4" and 24") ball chains. \$5.00/set

set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") \$3.00/each

Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANYTHING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line.

Printing only \$1.00 per tag (\$2.00 per set)

PLEASE, NO DOG TAG IMPRINTING ORDERS BY TELEPHONE.

Military Elite Distinctive Dog Tags - GENUINE GI



We've taken the official distinctive insignia of elite professional troops and affixed them to a genuine GI tag. Solid with 4" stainless chain...perfect for use as a keychain or worn with your dog tag set. Choose the elite dog tag of: Special Forces; Airborne/Rangers; Paratroopers; USMC Recon; USMC Globe & Anchor; 101st Airborne; or 82nd Airborne \$6.00/each.

Dog Tag Silencers - black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tags \$1.00/pair

Special Forces Green Beret - Jaunty and darning and classy - like the professional's who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for us by the prime government contractor. Also available:

- Airborne Qualified (Maroon)
 - Ranger Commandos (Black)
 - Artillery & Guard Angels (Red)
 - Commando Dress (Camouflage)
- Sizes - 6 7/8 to 7 3/4
- (Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one.) \$13.75/each

Drill Instructor/Smokey the Bear Hat

Formally called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt piece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or hear abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wistful self be heard. Sizes: 6-7/8 to 7 5/8 \$19.75/each

- Genuine Leather Chin Strap \$2.00/each
 - Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) \$6.00/each
- (Specify color silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue)

Camouflage Collection Catalog - featuring genuine military clothing and personal equipment \$1.00/each. Free with any order.

Jungle Hats - US Military Issue

These "Boonie Hats" are the real thing!! Brand new, complete with brass screened eyelets, cartridge holder hat band (except the Desert Camo) and chin strap. Choose between:

- Leaf pattern camouflage, GI ripstop; 100% cotton as used in Vietnam. Genuine GI \$14.00/each.
- Woodland Pattern camo, army's latest issue; 50% cotton/50% nylon Genuine GI \$12.25/each.
- Desert camouflage; just issued to the U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces. 50% cotton/50% nylon; Genuine GI \$12.25/each.
- Olive Drab (OD) Green; 100% cotton GI ripstop as used in early Vietnam. Genuine GI \$14.00/each.

The following jungle hats are our finest quality commercially made copies at \$7.00/each. Select:

- Leaf Camouflage Pattern
- Tiger Stripe Camouflage Pattern
- Olive Drab Green (OD)
- Desert Tan
- Desert Camouflage
- Black

Specify size: S(7); M(7 1/4); L(7 1/2); XL(7 3/4).

US Navy Style Commander's Cap with 'Scrambled Egg' Visor

This cap features a mesh back and fully adjustable headband to fit all heads comfortably. Choose: Navy Blue or Black \$5.75/each.

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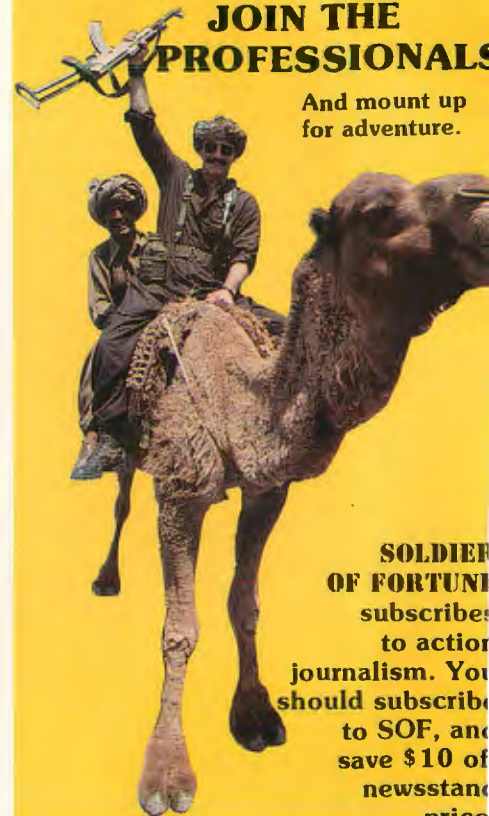
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The Proof is in the Performance

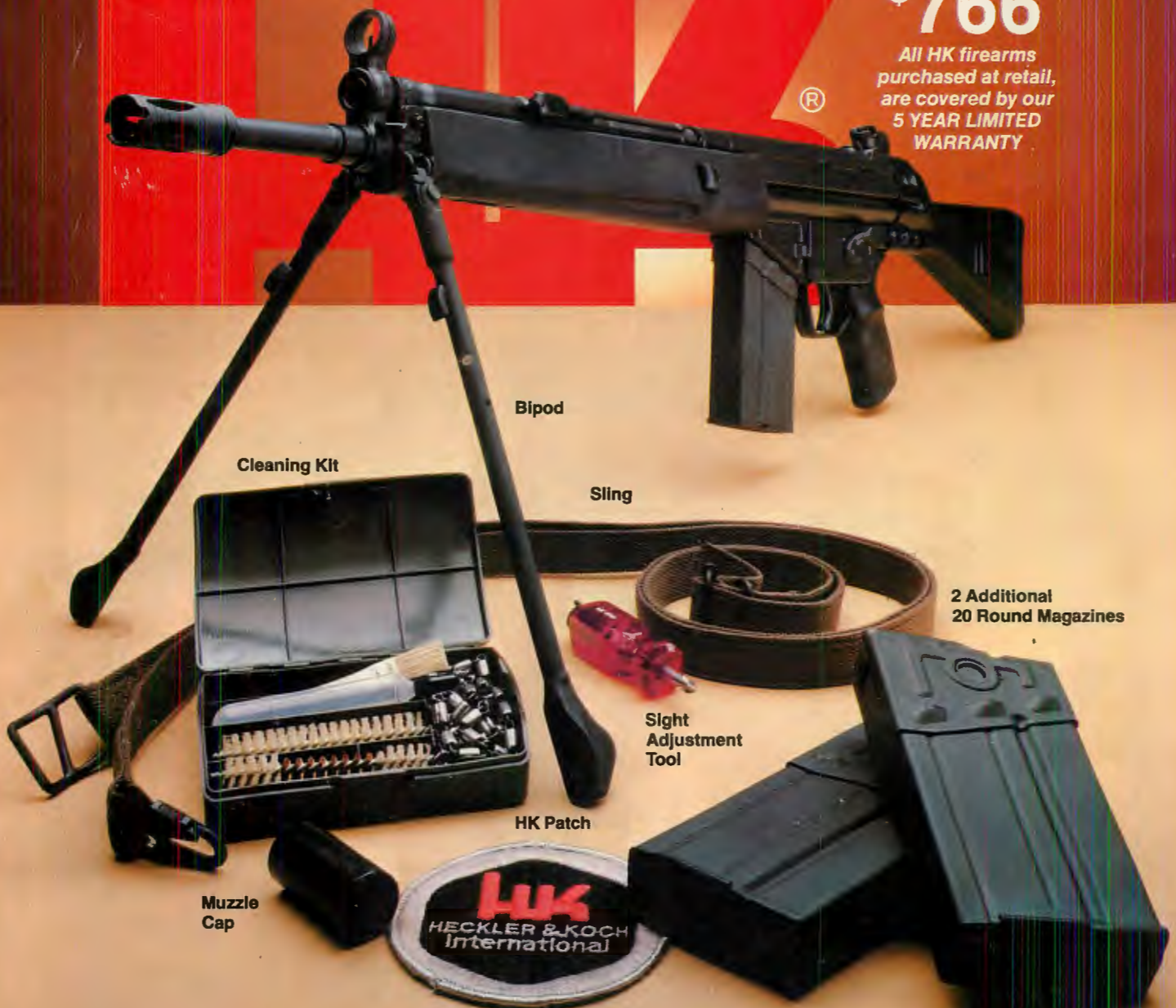
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